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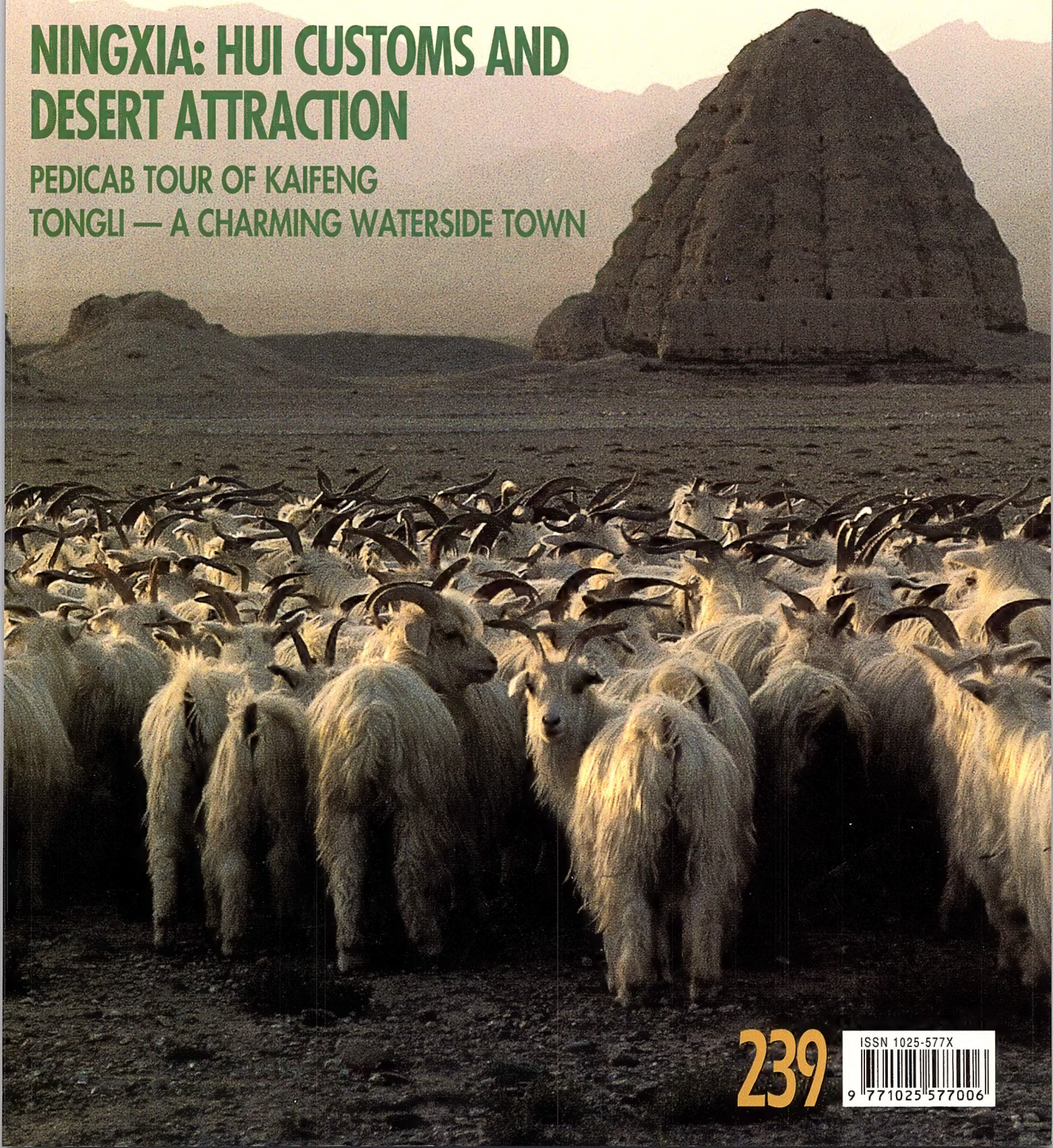
# China

C H I N A T O U R I S M

## NINGXIA: HUI CUSTOMS AND DESERT ATTRACTION

PEDICAB TOUR OF KAIFENG

TONGLI — A CHARMING WATERSIDE TOWN



239

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# 视股份



*Come and visit the Wuxi CCTV theme parks to immerse yourself in the historical atmosphere!*

*The Tang City and the Three Kingdoms & Outlaws of the Marsh City, two magnificent theme parks of Wuxi CCTV Film & Television Productions Co. Ltd., amaze the world with their beautiful scenery and man-made structures.*

*They vividly demonstrate the architecture, folklore, lifestyle and cultural heritage of the Han, Tang and Song, the three dynasties that are considered the epitome of the ancient Chinese society. Touring the theme parks, visitors can enjoy various entertainment programmes, such as horsemanship, singing and dancing, and stunt performances which demonstrate the colourful folk heritage left by these dynasties.*

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# 蘭生集團上海市醫藥保健品進出口公司

LANSHENG (GROUP) SHANGHAI MEDICINES & HEALTH PRODUCTS IMP. & EXP. CORP.



之

源



總經理：蔣震偉  
General Manager: Jiang Zhenwei

上海市醫藥保健品進出口公司(簡稱上海醫保)成立於1986年1月1日,是全國醫保行業中出口規模最大的企業之一,連年排名於中國進出口額最大的500家企業中。1997年9月,上海醫保加盟上海蘭生(集團)有限公司,以資產為紐帶,資產合併統一經營,使企業在深化改革,轉換機制方面邁出實質性的一步,並獲得了新的發展機遇和動力。

公司主要經營醫藥原料、中間體、中西成藥、中藥材、保健品、醫療器械、醫院設備、醫用敷料及其他商品的進出口貿易和代理,“三來一補”,承辦合資、合作經營等,與世界上130多個國家和地區建立了貿易往來關係。

Founded in January 1, 1986, the Shanghai Medicines & Health Products Import & Export Corporation is one of the biggest enterprises of its kind in China, and one of the country's top 500 companies in terms of import and export volumes.

The company joined the Shanghai Lansheng (Group) Corp. in September 1997, which enabled it to make greater progress in reforming its managerial system and finding more business opportunities.

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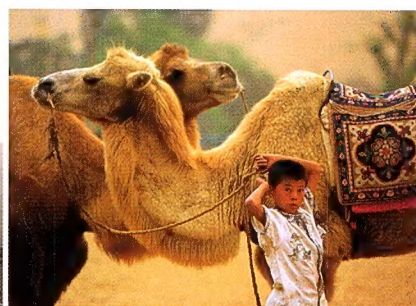


金  璽  
**GOLD SEAL**



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Cover: A Western Xia mausoleum (by Wang Miao)



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*Photos by Chan Yat Nin, Liu Xiaojuan, Liu Xianchen*

*Article by Chan Yat Nin, Shi Baoxiu, Jun Feng*

The Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region in the hinterland is not a familiar tourist destination to most travellers. Yet this highland inhabited by a quarter of the country's Hui people is enormously rich in tourist resources. There are the Helan Mountains, the Sand Lake, the Yellow River, cultural relics of the Western Xia Dynasty and the unique lifestyles of the Hui, or Chinese Muslims.

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*Photos by Wu Tinghong Article by Zou Zhihou*

In the picturesque mountainous area in western Hunan, the Miao people welcome tourists with their traditional customs. The wine, food, bonfire party and songs and dances give a warm festive feeling, making the visitors reluctant to leave.

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*Photos & article by Xiao Gang*

Kaifeng is one of China's ancient capital cities. Its name is popular with every Chinese household because of the description in the classic novel, *Outlaws of the Marsh*. A pedicab tour takes you to the historical sites while the senior pedicab rider recounts the history and legends of this city.

## On the Way

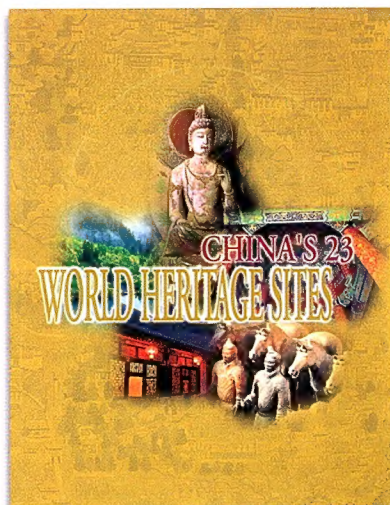
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*Photos by Xiao Hong Article by Liu Fengqun*



HOT OFF THE PRESS

# China's 23 World Heritage Sites



Today, more than 580 cultural and natural sites have been placed on UNESCO's World Heritage list. China, one of the world's four ancient civilisations, also has its share of these heritage sites. Up to 1999, 23 sites in the country have been honourably put on the list. These include the Mountain Resort in Chengde, the Temple of Heaven, the Ruins of Zhoukoudian, the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, the ancient city of Pingyao, Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum in Xi'an, Wulingyuan, Huanglong, Jiuzhaigou, Mount Emei, the ancient town of Lijiang, Potala Palace, Mount Wudang, Mount Taishan, Confucius' Temple,

Mansion and Cemetery in Qufu, Suzhou Gardens, Mount Huangshan, Mount Lushan, Mount Wuyi and Dazu Rock Carvings.

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China's 23 World Heritage Sites



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## ENJOYING THE GREAT OUTDOORS

What do city dwellers need most? The majority of those living in a big, crowded city like Hong Kong, Shanghai, or New York would answer: "An open area with fresh air!" That is why these days, besides beautiful seaside resorts, many people choose to travel in a grand wilderness such as a grassland or a desert.

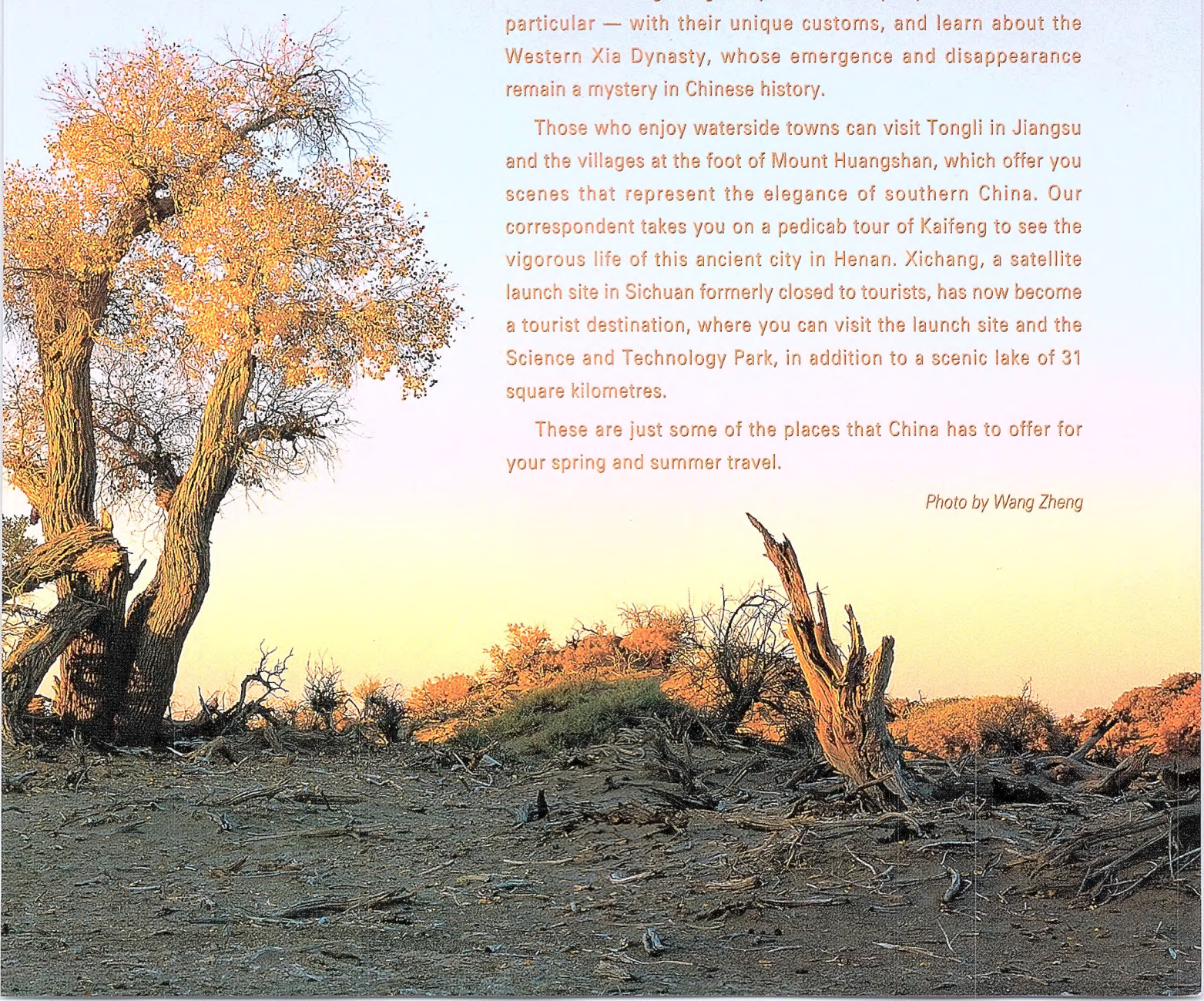
"Strait, the solitary smoke rises in the great desert; Round, the sun sets over the long river." These two lines from Wang Wei, a Tang-dynasty poet, portray a magnificent picture of the wilderness in western China, and intoxicate the reader's imagination. If you visit Ningxia's Shapotou, where the desert meets the Yellow River, you will find the true picture does exist and the poet did not exaggerate much in his writing.

While touring Ningxia, you will see people — the Huis in particular — with their unique customs, and learn about the Western Xia Dynasty, whose emergence and disappearance remain a mystery in Chinese history.

Those who enjoy waterside towns can visit Tongli in Jiangsu and the villages at the foot of Mount Huangshan, which offer you scenes that represent the elegance of southern China. Our correspondent takes you on a pedicab tour of Kaifeng to see the vigorous life of this ancient city in Henan. Xichang, a satellite launch site in Sichuan formerly closed to tourists, has now become a tourist destination, where you can visit the launch site and the Science and Technology Park, in addition to a scenic lake of 31 square kilometres.

These are just some of the places that China has to offer for your spring and summer travel.

*Photo by Wang Zheng*





## Potala Palace: Renovation for Fire Protection

The Chinese government will spend 4.9 million yuan (US\$590,000) on a project to further protect the Potala Palace in Lhasa from fire. Experts in history, ancient architecture, and geology will conduct surveys to prepare more detailed protection plans for the palace.

During the period from 1989 to 1994, the state spent 53 million yuan (US\$6.4 million) on a major renovation of the Potala, including repairing its various treasures. Since the 1950s, the Chinese government has spent more than 200 million yuan on the preservation of important Tibetan religious sites other than Potala Palace. Eighteen historical and cultural sites in Tibet are under state protection.



## New Panda Research Centre, Beijing

A new giant panda research centre will be built at the Beijing Zoo. The German-based Volkswagen Group will donate US\$385,542 for the construction and research facilities. The establishment will bring new blood to China's efforts in protecting the endangered animal, which is also considered as a national treasure.

Twenty researchers will work on eight research projects with the centre. According to Peng Zhenxin, director of the centre, besides research, the centre will also provide an excellent environment for the growth of baby pandas until they are big enough to leave. Visitors will have the chance to observe the newborn pandas from a glass-enclosed area.

Giant pandas live mainly in forests in Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu provinces in western China. Due to environmental changes and human activities, the number of giant pandas is fast decreasing and it is believed there are now only 1,000 pandas living in the wild. To save the pandas from the brink of extinction, the Chinese government has worked painstakingly on natural protection and artificial breeding of this special species. A total of 33 panda protection zones, including 14 panda reserves, have been established and 60 pandas have been successfully bred. This is the third giant panda research centre in China. The other two are in Wolong and Chengdu in Sichuan.



## 5,000-Year-Old Ruins Unearthed, Jiangsu

Two 5,000-year-old sites dating back to the Liangzhu Culture period have been discovered in Dakan Village near Jiangyin, Jiangsu Province in East China. A total of 13 imperial tombs of the Liangzhu Culture, one of the sources of the Chinese civilisation, were unearthed at the two sites. More than 235 items made of jade were unearthed at the tombs, together with pottery and stone ware.

Archaeologists believe that the discovery of the two sites proves that during the Liangzhu Culture period, there had been several political and cultural centres. The new discovery provides important references for the study of the origin of the Chinese civilisation.

## Application for World Heritage Site, Chengjiang, Yunnan

The site of arthropod fossils in Chengjiang County, Southwest China's Yunnan Province, plans to apply for listing as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site.

The Chengjiang fossils, dating back some 500 million years, include large quantities of tiny multicellular animals and their embryos. Their discovery has led to significant breakthroughs in attempts to understand human evolution. Experts considered these fossils as miracles in the evolution of organisms in the formation of the earth.



## Website to Help Save Giant Pandas

The protection of giant panda has caused worldwide concern. Wildlife activists from the United States, Japan and Australia have been "adopting" wild giant pandas in China since the 1980s. Those involved make donations to protect the animal from extinction.

Americans who love giant pandas can now adopt giant pandas in China by bidding on the website: <http://twinbays.com>. It is believed that the use of the Internet will greatly benefit the raising of funds for the world's most endangered wildlife species. The agreement signed between the China Wildlife Conservation Association (CWCA) and Twinbays International Inc., a US Internet service provider, will enable both corporations and individuals to "adopt" pandas.

Funds raised will be used to finance research programmes on the breeding of giant pandas and improvement of panda habitats.

## Hotel Industry Faces Challenges

China's hotel managers believe they should form an alliance to compete with foreign heavyweight rivals after the country enters the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Since China opened its hotel industry to foreign investment in 1979 in an effort to boost tourism, foreign hotel management groups, such as the Bass Group, have dominated the local luxury hotel management market. As many as 80 percent of the four- and five-star hotels in China are currently managed by professional foreign managers. But domestic hotel management groups, led by the Shanghai-based Jinjiang, Nanjing's Jinling and White Swan in Guangzhou, are struggling to stay afloat in the once-lucrative industry.

People in the hotel business say that a lack of local professional managers is hurting the growth of the domestic hotel management industry. Hotel owners have to turn to foreign managers despite management fees they charge average out to as much as 3 to 4 percent of the total turnover.

## New Art Museum, Guangzhou

A new art museum will soon open to the public in Guangzhou, capital of South China's Guangdong Province.

The first phase of the museum covers an area of 19,500 square metres and has nine halls devoted to Chinese artists. More than 2,776 works of calligraphy, traditional Chinese paintings, woodcuts and artistic collections, such as tangkas, copper statuettes, yellow-glaze dragon bowls from imperial kilns and inkstones, will be exhibited in these halls. Four other halls, which will feature overseas works, as well as a number of supporting facilities, will be built in the second phase of construction.

## Luoyang: Striving for Tourism

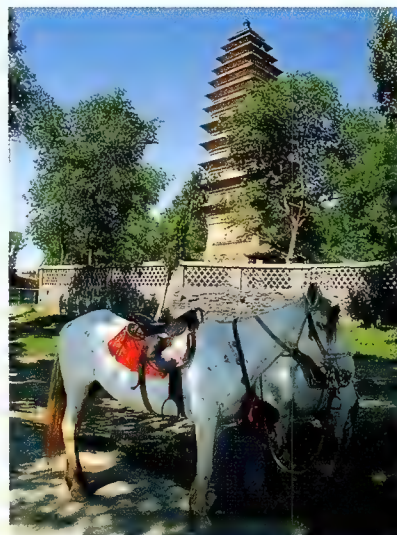
The ancient city of Luoyang in Central China's Henan Province is making great efforts to promote tourism. A famous historical and cultural city, Luoyang attracts tourists with its splendid culture and distinctive features.

Luoyang boasts a history of nearly 5,000 years. Over a period of 1,529 years in ancient China, it served as the capital of 96 emperors during 13 dynasties. Among the seven ancient capitals of China, Luoyang was the earliest, and served the longest time and for the most dynasties.

The city government will take scientific measures to protect its cultural relics and turn it into a beautiful garden city. The city now has seven major historical and cultural sites under state protection, 53 under provincial protection and more than 800 under municipal and county protection. The Longmen Grottoes are one of the three most important grotto groups in China. The Baima Temple is the first Buddhist temple ever established in China by the government since the spread of the religion in the country. Mingshan Mountain is the site of China's largest ancient tomb group. The oldest of the imperial tombs dates back to the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770-221 B.C.). The world's first museum of ancient tombs has been founded there.

Located on the bank of the Yellow River, Luoyang has many scenic spots too. To its north there is the newly built Xiaolangdi Reservoir; to its south, there are the Baiyun National Forest Park, the Shaolin Monastery and Mount Songshan, one of the Five Sacred Mountains in China.

The city also has a long history of peony cultivation. Its 600-odd varieties of peony are well known around the world. Every year in April, when tens of thousands of peony flowers are in full blossom, the Luoyang Peony Fair is held to attract visitors from home and abroad for sightseeing as well as trade negotiations.





## Recommendation

**A New Tourist Programme at Wuxi CCTV Film & Television Site**

## Wuxi

At the dawn of the new century, the three theme parks of Wuxi CCTV Film & Television Productions Co. Ltd., the Tang City, the Three Kingdoms City and the Outlaws of the Marsh City, organised a special programme in which visitors from both home and abroad can meet "historical figures" and film stars, and tour Taihu Lake.

The company has spent a total of 1 million yuan to produce more than 1,000 historical costumes of splendid designs. Wearing these costumes, the service people all seem to become the legendary historical figures! If you are lucky enough, you may bump into Wu Song, the tiger-killing hero in the Chinese classic, *Outlaws of the Marsh*, or his dwarf brother Wu Dalang. Besides, quite a number of films and TV programmes are now being shot in these theme parks, so you may also find yourself in the midst of film stars.

Another highlight of this new programme is the tour on the picturesque Taihu Lake on an ancient warship. In an environment which is modelled according to the novel, you feel like you have gone back into history.



## Transport

**New Hangzhou Railway Passenger Terminal Opens**

## Hangzhou

A new terminal for rail passengers has been put into operation recently in China's picturesque tourist city of Hangzhou. The new terminal was built at the site of the old Hangzhou Rail Station located at the city's East Gate. The railway station is the busy junction of the Zhejiang-Jiangxi, Shanghai-Hangzhou and Hangzhou-Ningbo railways and the door to the renowned Xihu Scenic Area.

The building of this new passenger terminal, which was started two years ago, is a key construction project in Zhejiang Province. The 18-storey terminal is 70 metres tall and covers an area of 80,000 square metres. The square in front of the terminal is linked with Xihu Lake by the Xihu Boulevard.

The brand new Hangzhou Railway Passenger Terminal is equipped with many hi-tech facilities such as the advanced electronic systems for arrival and departure display, ticketing, and luggage management and inspection. The terminal can accommodate 5,200 passengers and a total of seven trains at one time.

## Hotel

**Gloria Plaza Hotel in Suzhou**

## Suzhou

Since it opened three years ago, Gloria Plaza Hotel has been highly acclaimed by guests from all over the world, owing to its convenient location, efficient communication system, deluxe hotel facilities and four-star customer services. It is favourably situated on Ganjiang Road East, the main highway in Suzhou, and is in the proximity of the shopping area downtown and the renowned Singapore Industrial District.

When Gloria Plaza Hotel first opened in 1997, Asia was under the influence of the financial crisis. However, the hotel still managed to maintain an occupancy rate of 45 percent. In 1999, the figure had jumped to 70 percent and its profits from guest rooms ranked first among hotels of the same grade. Gloria Plaza Hotel owes its success to the support from the society, hence it decided to make a contribution back to society. Instead of holding grand parties to celebrate the 3rd anniversary, Gloria Plaza Hotel chose to spend the money in a more meaningful way by helping the poor and needy, supporting children who cannot afford to go to school, and visiting lonely elderly people.

## Festival

**Fujian in Jubilant Mood**

## Fujian

The coastal Fujian Province in East China is going to present a series of activities in the national programme, Touring China in the New Century, this year:

May: The 2nd Tourist Culture Festival in Jimei, Xiamen;

June: Sightseeing on Mount Tailao, Fuding, and the She Culture Festival;

July: Huaguo (Flowers and Fruits) Culture Festival, Zhangpu;

August: Boating and Mountain Climbing Festival, Jinhu, Taining;

November: The 2nd Earthen Tower Culture Festival in Yongding;

December: Snack Culture Festival in Shaxian.





## Hotel Sheraton Chengdu Lido Hotel Chengdu

Sheraton Chengdu Lido Hotel, founded in the capital of Sichuan, is now happily celebrating its soft-opening.

Rising 35 storeys, Sheraton Chengdu Lido Hotel stands majestically on Renmin Road Central, the hub of Chengdu's commercial and entertainment area. It is only a 30-minute drive from the Shuangliu International Airport and is in the vicinity of the railway station. The hotel is also close to Chengdu's major attractions like Dufu's Thatched Cottage and Temple of Marquis Wu.

Sheraton Chengdu Lido Hotel has 402 spacious rooms and suites, all equipped with IDD and Internet services, and international satellite TV. It also offers Executive Floors for the discriminating business travellers. Other services include a 24-hour business centre with secretarial service, airport limousine, in-house Internet and baby-sitting services.

The hotel has the most complete health club with a wide range of facilities, including sauna and steam bath, Jacuzzi and massage, gymnasium and an outdoor swimming pool. For golf lovers, a golf driving range is only a one-minute walk from the hotel.

Gourmets will be content with the wide choices of both Western and Asian cuisine offered by the hotel's food and beverage outlets, such as the Nova Cafe & Grill, and the Celestial Court which serves appetising Sichuan and Cantonese food. The Fontana Bar and Sidewalk Lounge offer an elegant setting for social and business gatherings.

Banquet facilities and services are also available for special occasions. The grand ballroom can serve up to 500 guests for banquets, and can be divided into two 184-square-metre sections. Its three function rooms can cater for 20 to 95 guests.

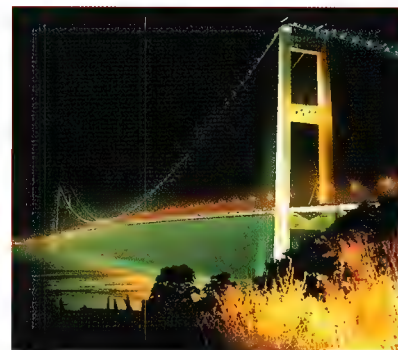
To celebrate its soft-opening, Sheraton Chengdu Lido Hotel is offering special opening rates from US\$88, including one breakfast, from mid-May to August 31, 2000.

## Scenic Spot Yangtse Bridge Adds Beauty to Jiangyin Jiangyin

The newly-built Yangtse Bridge in Jiangyin, Jiangsu Province, opened to traffic in October 1999. Designated China's No.1 and the world's No. 4 suspension bridge, the main section of the bridge is 1,358 metres long and 36.9 metres wide. Together with the 1,518-metre approach bridge in the north and the 168-metre approach bridge in the south, the entire structure measures 3,071 metres long. The north and south bridge towers supporting the main beam reach 193 metres high.

Winding from east to west along the river is a thousand-metre-long plank walkway. On its east end at Xiaoshi Bay is an ancient battery. The battery was built in the late Qing Dynasty in western architectural style. It was renovated in 1997 to prevent further dilapidation. Up on the Eshan Mountain, there are batteries and caves which were used as soldiers' hideouts in the early years of the Republic. From the River-Watching Tower on the summit, the Yangtse River looks like a giant dragon dancing on the vast territory. The bridge and the river combine harmoniously to form a magnificent picture.

The best vista of the Yangtse Bridge is at the Ebizhui Park right at the foot of the bridge. Inside the park there are verdant vegetation and quite a number of scenic attractions.



## Event Colourful Activities in Jiangxi Jiangxi



Jiangxi Tourism Administration has arranged a kaleidoscope of tourist activities in 2000 to attract both domestic and foreign tourists. Some of the highlights are: Mount Lushan Tourist Festival in June, Jingdezhen International Porcelain Festival, Mount Longhu Taoist Cultural Festival and Mount Lushan Shannan International Tea Festival in October.

## New Route A Two-day Romantic Tour on Lijiang River, Guilin Guilin

The beautiful Guilin in Guangxi Province had put forward a two-day romantic tour on the Lijiang River. This is a new route travelling from Guilin to Pingle.

The Guilin-Yangshuo route on Lijiang River is a very popular river tour route. However, tourists usually find this one-day trip too tight for them to admire all the scenery along the way, especially at the lower course of the river.

Now joining this two-day romantic tour on Lijiang, travellers will have time to pay a visit to Dayu, an ancient town and to the fishing village where the US president Bill Clinton stopped by in 1998. They can also immerse themselves in the poetic atmosphere on the way from Yangshuo to Xingping, and from Fuli to Pingle.





## Event The 14th International Travel Expo Hong Kong

The most established international travel exhibition of Hong Kong — the 14th International Travel Expo Hong Kong (ITE HK 2000) — is scheduled to be held from June 8 to 11, 2000 at Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. While the travel and tourism industry recovers gradually from the prevailing economic downturn in the new millennium, ITE HK 2000 will be serving as a springboard for the industry growth.

The show this year highlights corporate travel, a subject with increasing importance globally. Hong Kong, an outstanding example of an international city, contributes a large amount of expenses to corporate travel every year. A dedicated theme for Corporate and Incentive Travel will be launched on Day 2 (June 9) of the show. Seminars and presentations will also be organised to cover flexible and economical measures for air ticketing, hotel booking, corporate accounts with hotels and travel agents, and Internet booking, to name a few. Exhibitors can promote their products and meet with the corporate buyers directly.

While golf has received increasing attention in recent years, representing a significant and growing market for the tourism industry, ITE HK 2000 has no hesitation in expanding its wing to the sport. The Golf Holiday Pavilion that will be launched at this function involves regional golf resorts and courses. It is envisaged that overseas buyers will be attracted in their search for business expansion.

So far, exhibitors from 44 countries and regions have already confirmed their participation in this year's expo while others are still considering joining the event. Apart from the continuous support of the past exhibitors, the show has also attracted newcomers. The organiser disclosed that the National Tourism Organisations of Qatar and Sharjah are going to participate for the first time at ITE HK 2000 whilst United Kingdom and France will rejoin the show this year. ITE HK also welcomes many other new participants including representatives of travel agents, hotels, tourist destinations and attractions from Canada, Dubai, Germany, Hong Kong, China, Myanmar, Russia, South Africa, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe.

In short, ITE HK 2000 will showcase various kinds of products and services including airlines, adventure/special interest holidays, attractions/destinations/theme parks, computer reservation systems, conventions, conference and meeting facilities, cruises, ground transportation, hotels/resorts, national/regional tourism organisations and tour operators/travel agents. The first two days of the expo are for members of the industry and business travellers only, while the remainder is open to public. For further information, please contact Adsale Exhibition Services Ltd. Tel: (852) 2811 8897, fax: (852) 2516 5024, e-mail: itehk@adsaleexh.com or visit the show website: www.itehk.com.



## Recommendation Qianxian

### Tang-Dynasty Polo Reappears in Qianxian

Qianxian in Shaanxi Province has recently launched an extraordinary tourist programme — the performance of Tang-dynasty imperial polo. Qianxian, 70 kilometres from Xi'an, is the location of the Qianling Mausoleum, the tomb of the third Tang emperor, Gaozong and his empress Wu Zetian, the first woman emperor in Chinese history. The mural, *Polo Playing*, the first of its kind in the world, is found in the mausoleum, which is important proof of the existence of this game in China 1,300 years ago. According to records, in the Tang Dynasty,

polo was a very popular game among the royal family, nobles, officials and even women.

To let tourists appreciate the charm of this 1,000-year-old sport, Shaanxi Qianling Museum and Qianling Tourism Development Co. formed the Qianling Tang-dynasty Polo Team consisting of 22 male and female players. The polo ground, 60 metres long and 40 metres wide, sits at the end of the mausoleum's royal path. Players on horseback enact two forms of the game: hitting the ball into the goal with mallets or shooting the ball at the basket. Each game lasts 10 minutes. Both men and women players wear Tang-dynasty attire and the horses are colourfully decorated too. Explanations and commentary are given throughout the game.

Apart from the polo game, Qianling Mausoleum authority also offers other programmes rich in Tang-dynasty cultural colour. For example, tourists can have a ride on imitation Tang-dynasty horse-drawn carriages along the imperial path, and try the imperial banquet and typical snacks for a taste of the Tang dining culture.



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*Straight, the solitary smoke rises in the great desert;  
Round, the sun sets over the long river.*

## NINGXIA: YELLOW RIVER, SAND DUNES AND CHINESE MUSLIMS

**T**he vast desert area in China's northwest has always been an alluring place for tourists, people are familiar with Lanzhou and Urumqi, along the Gansu Corridor, but fewer know the Yellow River and Hui people in Ningxia and Alxa League in western Inner Mongolia. The Helan Mountains, Ningxia Plain, Ebinur Plateau, Alxa, Tengger and Badain Jaran deserts, and the Yellow River Bend are prominent features of this area in the central part of the Northwest, which also includes oases, grassland, mountains, rivers and lakes. The infinite and majestic scenery of this vast expanse are graphically and fittingly described in the two lines of a poem by Wang Wei, a great Tang-dynasty poet: "Straight, the solitary smoke rises in the great desert; Round, the sun sets over the long river."

Convenient transportation has helped the Ningxia area speed up tourism development. Shapotou, where the Yellow River meets the Tengger Desert, the Shami Lake in the desert as well as the historical sites of the Western Xia have become hot tourist spots. The unique ethnic customs of the Hui people in Ningxia also attract visitors. Western Inner Mongolia, though remote, has become widely known among art photographers for the Alxa "camel country", the dramatically undulating and beautiful sand dunes of Badain Jaran Desert, and the photogenic poplar forests in Ejin.







## Where the Yellow River Meets the Desert

# SHAPOTOU

*Photos & article by Chan Yat Nin*

**W**hile serving as an Imperial Censor, Wang Wei, the great Tang-dynasty poet, travelled to Ningxia on the other side of the Great Wall to reward the men of a victorious army. He wrote the famous poem based on this trip: "Travelling Beyond the Great Wall", which reads in translation:

Travelling to the frontier in a single carriage; An envoy passes through Juyan  
Like a thistle flower drifting out of the Han fort; And a wild goose flying into the Tartar sky.  
Straight, the solitary smoke rises in the great desert; Round, the sun sets over the long river.  
Meeting a mounted scout at Xiaoguan; I was told the commander was in Yanran.

Later, when people looked for this picturesque scenery in this poem, they found that Shapotou was most like it. Here the torrential Yellow River rushes out of the Black Mountain Gorge at Gansu-Ningxia border and flows into the Ningxia Plain. The river valley broadens out and





the boundless Tengger Desert rolls down from the north like golden waves to Fragrant Hill on the Yellow River's southern bank. The dilapidated Great Wall winds its way through the yellow sand, grass and wasteland to the Yellow River's northern bank. Yet it is not a picture of desolation. There are oases here and there with green trees, fields, homes and household smoke, which look magnificent in the crimson setting sun.

### The Legendary Sand Slope

Shapotou, or Head of Sand Slope, is 22 km from the county seat of Zhongwei. It is a landmark of the county and also the backdrop of many legends.

One local legend says there was an ancient city at Shapotou, called Prince of Gui's City. It had a huge bronze bell for subduing evil spirits in the city. Wu Qi, the son of Prince Gui, was captured while leading his army on a northern desert expedition. Since he was highly skilled in martial arts, the chieftain threatened to kill him unless he agreed to work for him. Wu Qi had no alternative, but planned his escape. To win the chieftain's trust, he vowed, "If I try to run away, I shall be buried by the yellow sand." One day he escaped and the booming of the bell sounded his return. A fierce sandstorm followed, blotting out sky and earth and burying the city in yellow sand.

At the bottom of the Sand Slope, the tomb of the Prince of Gui rests by a clear spring called Leiquan (Spring of Tears) which is said to have been formed by the tears of the prince's people. And the toll of the bell can still be heard. After a rain, the sand produces the booming bell sound as wind blows over it or when people or horses move across it. This is the electrostatic effect produced by the friction of the top layer of heated dry sand with the damp sand below. This slope has now become a site for sand sliding known throughout the country and is visited by a steady stream of tourists.

### A Miracle in Sand Control

The conquering of drifting sand at Shapotou is indeed a miracle. The Tengger Desert is the fourth largest desert in China, where the sand dunes rise and fall like waves. The sand

is 70 to 100 metres in depth and about 71 percent of the sand dunes are shifting. During a sandstorm, the sky and the earth are totally obscured by yellow sand as the dunes push forward. Wind blows over 300 times a year and the air is saturated with sand each time. The sand dunes move forward from two to five metres every year. Over the last 300 years, the Tengger Desert expanded 7.5 km southward and 2,700 hectares of fertile fields in Zhongwei were buried.

When the Baotou-Lanzhou Railway,



which runs 45 km through the desert, was built in the 1950s, the experts devised an effective method to prevent the sand from encroaching upon the railway. A huge network of 4,800 hectares was built on the two sides of the railway. Wheat straw was planted in the sand to form small squares, inside each of which desert shrubs were planted. Over the years, as the plants grew and covered the sand completely, they formed a windbreak. Today, more trees are being planted and the greenery is still expanding.

Shapotou has set an example for successful sand control. The United Nations Environment Programme has organised visits for specialists to Shapotou, making it known throughout the world for the "Green Great Wall" around it.

### Touring the Yellow River on a Sheepskin Raft

Visitors to Shapotou also come for the scenery and excitement of the Yellow River's turbulent waters. This section of the Yellow River is broad but not quiet. It roars past with white-crested waves as if it is flowing through a gorge. This is due to the ingenious ancient water conservancy work — the water diversion work at the head of the Meili Canal. The project was first built during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220) and improved in later dynasties. A long embankment

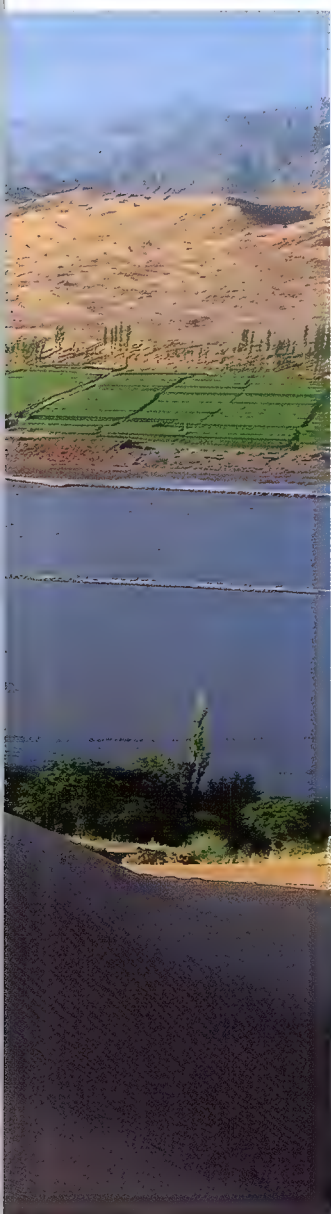
Previous page: The vast Tengger Desert

1. This ancient waterwheel is still functioning.

2. Shapotou, where the desert meets the Yellow River (by Liu Xianchen)

3. The making of a sheepskin raft

4. Drifting on the Yellow River by sheepskin raft





paralleling the water flow was built in mid-stream close to the northern bank. It splits the torrential Yellow River into two channels, creating a higher water level by the northern bank so that water can flow into the canal whatever the river's water level. When the river floods, water flows over the embankment, throwing up a long line of white spray which the local people call "the white horse pulling the reins".

The sheepskin raft used to be the only means of ferrying man, animals and goods across the Yellow River in this area. Now it has become a pleasure craft for tourists. Floating down the river on such a raft is by no means a comfortable experience. The raft is made with about a dozen inflated whole sheepskins with a wooden frame fastened on top. When a wave breaks over the raft, everyone gets wet. Nevertheless, people still find infinite pleasure in the rafting. They can drift a short distance to the islet near the embankment or several dozen km downstream from the Great Waterwheel.

In those years before motor vehicles and trains, the sheepskin raft, popularly called *huntuo*, was an indispensable means of transport. People also used to hold a small inflated sheepskin and swim across the river. A large raft, constructed with over 100 inflated sheepskins, had a carrying capacity of 20 to 30 tons and could drift several hundred km. There are no more of the super-rafts today, just few small ones used by farmers and those created for tourists' pleasure.



### Riding a Camel into the Desert

At the bottom of the great sand slope is a camel station, from where you can ride a camel up and down the sand dune for 10 yuan. But to really enjoy the sight of the boundless desert, you must go on a long-distance ride on the "desert boat".

Touring on camel back is a novel and unforgettable experience. It is quite different from riding a horse because you are much higher off the ground. When the camel ambles across the dunes, it rolls and pitches like a boat. Camels also like to trot down a slope in fast steps, giving you a feeling of being thrown forward. A short tour of one or two







hours allows you to see some of the sights in the vast desert. A longer tour lasting several days is more like an expedition in a caravan of camels, where you eat and sleep in the open, feel the full freedom of the boundless desert and forget all about your worries.

Deep in the Tengger Desert are two camping sites. It takes about

half a day to reach them riding a camel. Some tourists prefer to arrive by motor vehicle and take a short tour on a camel from there. These campsites provide food, guides and lodging in Mongolian yurts, and hot water from solar water heaters. Following the traditions of this Mongolian grazing pasture, the campsites serve boiled mutton that is eaten with the fingers and butter tea. There are also Mongolian folk song performances by the girls. During times of numerous visitors, a traditional Mongolian Nadam Fair may be held, in which visitors can participate in various recreational activities such as horse racing, wrestling, archery, singing and dancing.

1. Tourists have heads wrapped to avoid the sand.
2. A young camel herdsman
3. Camping in the heart of the desert (by Liu Xianchen)
4. A bonfire part held at the camping site (by Liu Xianchen)
5. Planting wheat straw in the desert to stabilise the sand



An Ecological Haven

## SHAHU LAKE

**S**hahu (Sand) Lake is an extraordinary body of sky-blue water covering 700 hectares in the middle of 2,000 hectares of desert. The mixture of sand and water here has created some spectacular scenery that continually pleases visitors. The Shahu Tourist Area established around this lake has been rated as one of the 35 best tourist spots in China.

*Photos & article by Zhuo Huafu*





## A Paradise for Migratory Birds

As the old saying goes, "Of all places, Ningxia has gained the most benefit from the Yellow River." Over the centuries, the river's natural tributaries and man-made network of canals, such as the Qin, Han and



Tanglai, have irrigated fields and orchards, transforming the plain into an area as fertile as the Yangtse Delta. Now the existence of Shahu (Sand Lake) again illustrates this saying well. In 1952, after the Donggan Canal was built, the diverted waters of the Yellow River created a new fresh-water lake, Sand Lake.

Sand Lake, in Pingluo County, is 56 km north of Yinchuan, the capital city of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. The blue colour of the water is striking, and strongly contrasts with the glimmering yellow sand and the Helan Mountains in the background. The water is exceptionally clear, unlike its river source. The large expanse of the lake is dotted here and there with clusters of luxuriant reed groves. Some of the channels between them are so narrow that cruising on the lake here is like going through an intricate maze. A gentle breeze wafts the fresh fragrance of the reeds over the sparkling gem-like surface of the lake.

Many migratory birds choose Sand Lake as their annual way station on their route south. From May to September, tens of thousands of white cranes, grey cranes, black storks, wild geese, swans, Chinese merganser ducks, great-crested grebes and many others come to this well-protected environment. They feast



1. Reed groves on the Sand Lake
2. Spring is the breeding season for the birds. (by Liu Xianchen)
3. It is a luxury to watch a migratory bird so closely. (by Liu Xianchen)





on the abundance of fish, plankton and water weeds, and build their nests in the reeds. During this time, the sound of an approaching motorboat may alarm the birds, who then dart out of the reeds, taking flight temporarily with a suddenness that startles visitors. Within the reeds, many others keep still, incubating their eggs or guarding their young.

When the motorboat stops at Bird Island on the eastern side of the lake, you can climb to the top of the Vista Tower and take in the sensational view with binoculars. Here you can enjoy the beauty of the many different species without scaring the birds away. This paradise for migratory birds is at the same time a paradise for bird-watchers.

### A Water World

Ferries take visitors to the lake's southern side where there is a noisy amusement park. This is the place to enjoy one of the many types of water sports available. Swimming is the most popular and people in colourful suits swim about or go out to a floating platform. Others prefer to get their thrills water skiing or paragliding, or by going down the waterslide.

There is also plenty to amuse you on land. You can conquer the great sand

dunes on a camel's back or on the cableway. On the other side of the dune you can try a dune buggy or slide down the slope on a board. Handling a dune buggy in the sand is not as easy as it looks. After some trial and error, most people learn how to avoid going round in circles or getting bogged down in the sand. Some people like to bury themselves in the sand just for fun and the feel of it; others believe it to be good for the health.

The Lakeside Restaurant in the Shahu Tourist Area serves a wonderful meal of fish freshly caught from the lake. There are more than 10 species of fish in the lake, including common, silver, grass and crucian carp, and bream, as well as salamanders and turtles. One of the restaurant's distinguished specialities is its fish banquet, which includes the big-head fish casserole. This fish can grow up to a dozen kg; its meat is sweet and its head is big enough to satisfy the appetites of five or six people.

Sand Lake is beautiful in autumn too, when the golden reeds sprout their downy, flossy flowers. In winter, it becomes a paradise for skaters and sleigh riders.

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1. Watching the birds from the Vista Tower
2. Stylish pavilions built on the lake banks
3. The Sand Lake is a paradise for winter activities too. (by Liu Xianchen)
4. Riding a dune buggy
5. A platform for paragliding at the lake
6. There is also an area for fishing.

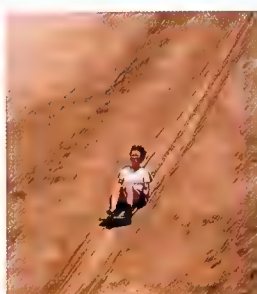


## TIPS FOR THE TRAVELLER

### Shapotou

Take a train from Yinchuan, get off at the Shapotou or Zhongwei stop. Buses take you to the scenic spot. A long-distance bus goes from Yinchuan to Zhongwei, a journey of 167 km. Zhongwei is 22 km from Shapotou.

Two or three days are needed for a trip riding a camel into the desert. Shapo Villa and the camping sites in the desert are available for accommodation.



### Fees for Touring Shapotou

Item	Charge (yuan/person)	
Admission	Tourist Area	15
	Sand Botanical Garden	5
Sheepskin	to Embankment	10
Raft	to Meili Canal	20
Camel Ride	Station—Bell Slope	16
	Meili Canal—Bell Slope	20
	to the Desert	20/hour
Yacht	to Summer Camp	10/hour
	to Canal	15/hour
Sand Slide	rent for board	15
Cable Car		15
Shapo Villa		40/night/person

Agencies & Hotels	Address	Tel	Fax
Zhongwei Tourism Bureau	7 West Street, Zhongwei	(953) 7012620	7012961
Shapotou Travel Service	2 North Street, Zhongwei	(953) 7012961	7019993
Zhongwei Hotel	33 West Street, Zhongwei	(953) 7012609	7012350
Yixing Hotel	2 North Street, Zhongwei	(953) 7012666	7019993

### Sand Lake

Take a tourist bus or hire a car to go from Yinchuan to Shahu, 56 km away.

The best season is May-October. April-May is the breeding season for birds, so it is better for bird watchers. Summer is good for water sports lovers.

One day is enough for touring the Sand Lake, but there are Mongolian yurts for those who want to stay for the night. The restaurant is located on the north bank of the lake.



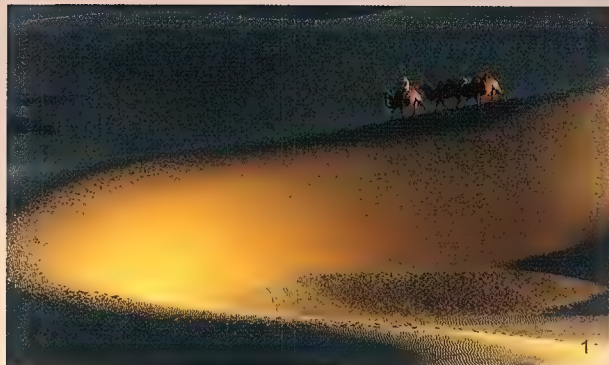
# The Special Charms of the Desert

**ALXA**

*Photos by Wang Miao, Liu Xiaojuan Article by Shi Baoxiu*







**L**ying in the western end of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Alxa League, with more desert than grassland, is full of mystery. Inner Mongolia is divided into leagues, known as prefectures elsewhere in the country; each league is further divided into a number of banners, or counties. Surprisingly, Alxa League, which is very large — 270,000 square kilometres — only has three banners: Alxa Left, Alxa Right and Ejin. Of course, each of these banners is itself very large, but the population throughout the league is merely 170,000, which means less than one person to every two square kilometres.

Alxa's sparse population can be best explained by looking at the map. Three deserts almost fill the whole league: the Tengger Desert in the south, the Ulan Buh Desert in the northeast and the Badain Jaran, which is the second largest desert in China, in the centre and the north.

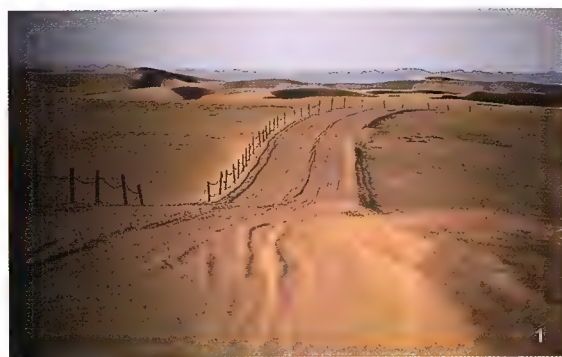
1. The Badain Jaran Desert has the world's highest sand dunes. (by Liu Xiaojuan)
2. A spectacular poplar tree in the desert (by Wang Quan)
3. Travelling through the desert on camels (by Huang Songhui)



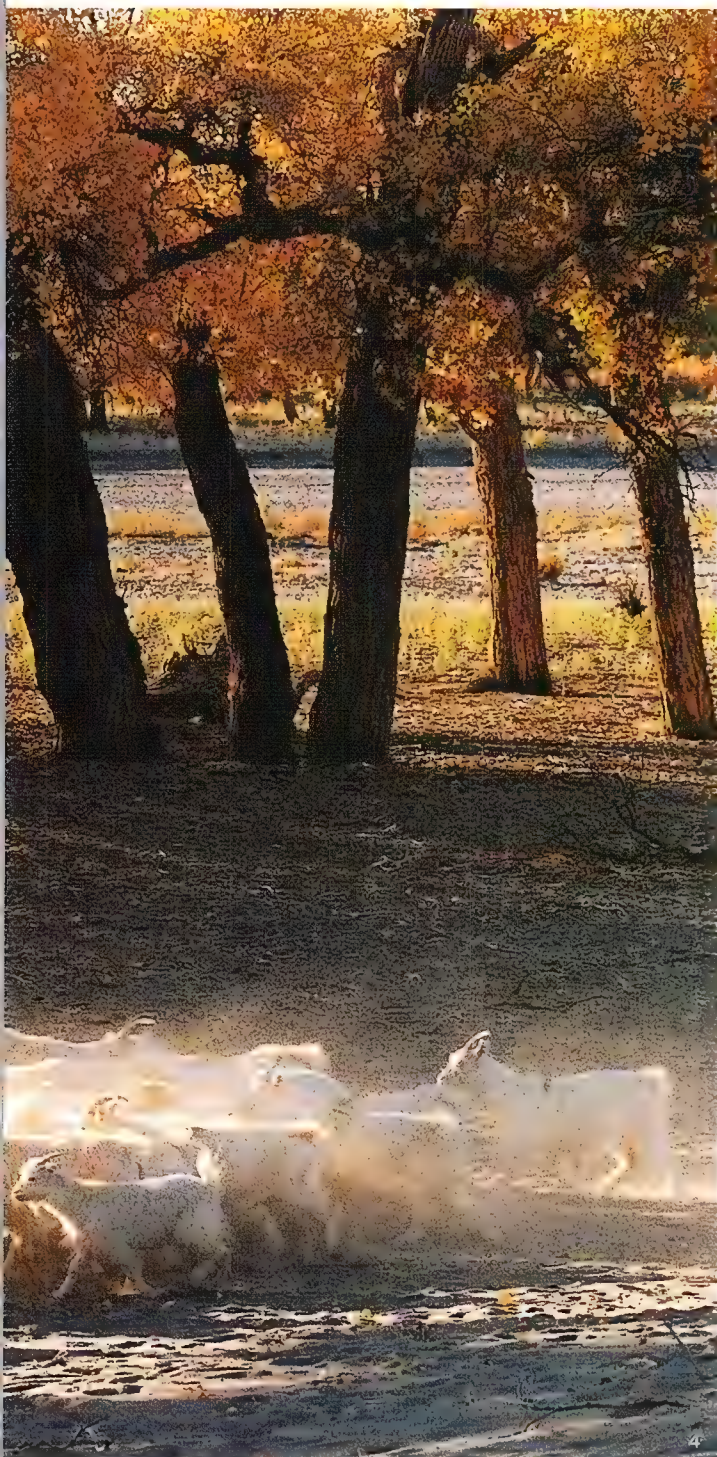
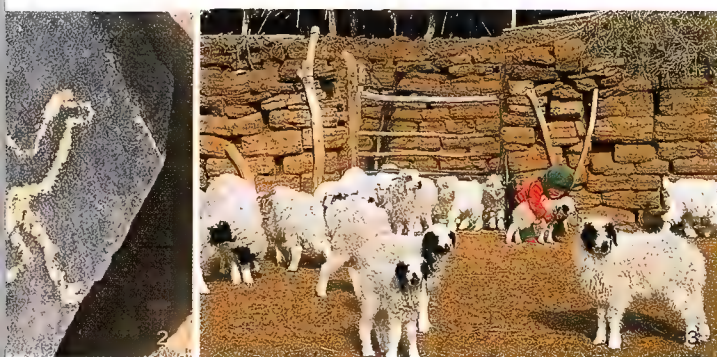
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### The Five Marvels of Badain Jaran

The first destination for many travellers is the Badain Jaran, because there is a 10,000-square-km section of this desert that, untouched by development, remains a mysterious attraction. Also, the following five marvellous features are strong drawing points.







**Jigde Peak** The numerous crescent-shaped sand dunes, which stand together like a chain, are the most typical scenes here. Other dunes that rise like pyramids to heights around 200 metres are less neatly arranged but still magnificent. The Jigde Sand Dune is one of these pyramids, which, rising 500 metres, towers over all the rest. Being over 70 metres taller than the highest sand dune in Algeria, it has earned the reputation as the “Qomolangma” of the world’s deserts.

**Buri Tolgain** This steep “Roaring Sand Dune”, rising 200 metres, is famous for the roaring airplane sound that occurs when a person sweeps the sand downhill. The sound quickly builds up its momentum to sound like rolling thunder. Playing in the sand with your fingers causes a pleasant rustling sound. This unique rattle happens over a vast area here.

**Lakes in the Desert** The Badain Jaran Desert boasts about 140 lakes and ponds of varying sizes.

Nortu Lake, about 20 km from Buri Tolgain, is a clear and calm lake with reed plants by the shore which is surrounded by rolling sand dunes. It takes two days from Buri Tolgain on camels to reach Cedegol Lake deep in the heart of the desert. Heaps of stones mark Mongolian ritual sites by the lake. Annually, on the 25th day of the 7th lunar month, Mongolian herdspeople converge here to hold a grand religious ceremony.

**Yinder Springs** Some 50 km from Buri Tolgain, there is a thick forest in the sand dune. Surprisingly, nearly 100 small springs gush out from a rock less than three square metres in size in a salt lake. The spring water is said to help cure stomach troubles. In winter, the spring does not freeze but steam spurts up several metres. No wonder the former nobility of Alxa readily hired people to fetch its water.

**Desert Palace at Sumin Jaran** The Badain Jaran Temple, described as a desert palace by local herdspeople, is nestled in the heart of this desert and can be reached in six hours by camel from Buri Tolgain. For this difficult project, every brick, stone and piece of wood was brought in by camel from several hundred km away. The beams and pillars were carried there by men.



1. The road leading to the desert (by Wang Miao)
2. An ancient cliff carving of a camel (by Huang Songhui)
3. Growing up together (by Hasbagen)
4. Sheep grazing in the poplar forest (by Liu Xiaojuan)
5. Inside a Mongolian yurt (by Wang Miao)



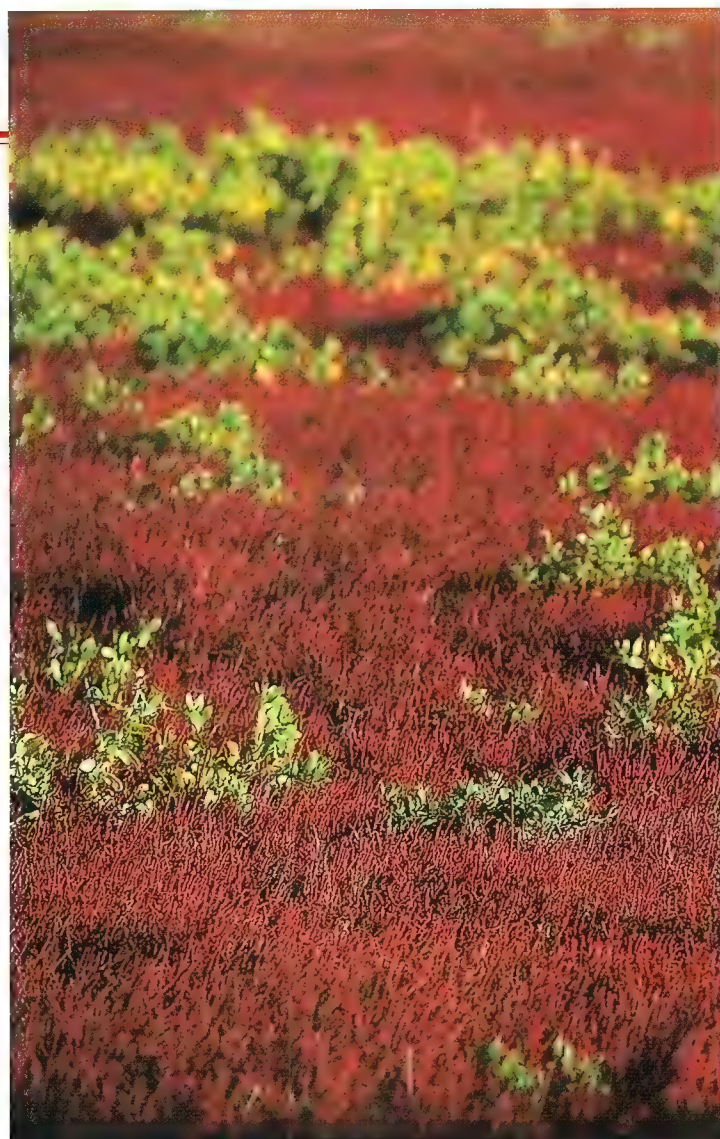


### **Ejin — A Desert Oasis**

The route northward between the Badain Jaran and Ulan Buh deserts is called a national highway, but in reality its surface is full of pot holes and several cm of dusty earth. Vehicles rock their way forward amidst the turbid dust as if the wheels were square. Desolate land with very little grass stretches out from both sides of the road. You may drive for five or six hours before coming across a Mongolian yurt or a few houses of the road maintenance team. Camels roam all over this dry pebbled land.

It takes you two days to enter the boundary of Ejin Banner and immediately the scenery changes into a fascinating oasis. Through the 700-km distance, you have seen hardly a single tree or patch of green. But all of a sudden, you find yourself in the middle of a diversiform-leaf poplar forest. Naturally, you will be overwhelmed with excitement. The changing colours of plants and grass during autumn make Ejin's scenery even more spectacular.

The poplars are found in the lower reaches of the Ejin River which originates in the Qilian Mountains some 500 km away. The river starts out as the Heihe, which flows across Zhangye area in Gansu, becomes the Ruoshui when it reaches Jiuquan, still in Gansu, and turns into the Ejin in Alxa. As a seasonal river, it has more dry days than days with water. The poplars along the river are deep-rooted and grow quickly when nourished by river water.



The poplar is crucial to the lifestyle of the Mongolian herdspeople here. They build their homes and their sheep and camel sheds in the forest, and make fences, furniture and tools with the timber. Household utensils, such as the milk and grain buckets, basin, bowl and ladle are all made by hollowing tree stumps of different diameters.

In autumn, glorious purple flowers mix with the world of gold in the Ejin River Valley. At Jargalang Tum, not far from Dalain Hob, seat of Ejin Banner, towering poplars are particularly sturdy and strong. In some areas, the grass blooms with purple flowers that intoxicate the eyes.

### **Ruins of Western Xia City**

On the edge of the oasis by the western bank of the Ejin River Valley lies the ruins of a mysterious ancient town. It is recorded in the book, *Travels of Marco Polo*, and local people refer to it as Heichengzi.

This 800-year-old frontier town was rather large. Remains of the original city walls still stand five to six metres high. Traces of streets that had once burst with activity are barely visible, as are ruins of houses. In some places, complete roofs poke through the sand as if the houses were buried not long ago.

Heichengzi was built during the Western Xia Dynasty (1038-1227).





3

Records show that even in the Western Han Dynasty over 2,000 years ago, it was an important frontier. Emperor Wudi sent troops to guard the place and farm the land. The troops also built the Great Wall to Gaxum Nur.



4

There is a legend told among the local people about General Hei, who defended the town against the attacking Yuan-dynasty forces. After several years he had to abandon it when his opponent cut off the water supply, but before he retreated, he buried all the town's treasures deep under a dry well. During the ensuing fight, the general died and all the residents and wounded soldiers were murdered. Thus no one was left to recover the hidden treasures.

## TIPS FOR THE TRAVELLER

Bayan Hot or Alxa Left Town, seat of Alxa Banner, is only a two-hour drive across the Helan Mountains from Yinchuan, capital of Ningxia. Major historic and scenic sites at Bayan Hot include Yanfu Temple and the palace of the prince of Alxa.

### Transport

- Bayan Hot-Ejin Banner (640 km): There is a daily long-distance bus service, a 12-hour drive each way. Travellers should take sufficient food and water.
- Bayan Hot-Badain Jaran Desert: To visit any of the attractions along this route, as a group or as independent tourists, you must hire a cross-country jeep or camels at the Alxa League Travel Service. Local guides are also available. Tel or Fax: (483) 833 3104.

Adventure tourists wishing to explore the Badain Jaran Desert can take tours of 5, 7, 10 or 15 days, or special desert trekking tours organized by the Alxa League Travel Service.

### Accommodation

- Bayan Hot: Alxa Left Banner Hotel: Tel: (483) 822 2191;  
Alxa League Hotel: Tel: (483) 833 1329
- Dalain Hob: Ejin Banner Hotel
- Alxa Right Banner: Nine-Tree Mongolian Village (Mongolian yurts)

### Note

The best time to visit the Badain Jaran Desert is between July and October; the best time to see the autumn poplars at Ejin Banner is early to middle October. It is about 400 km to Ejin Banner from Jiayuguan at the western end of the Great Wall in Gansu Province.



This legend led many people, including Sven Hedin from Sweden, Aurel Stein from Britain and Pyotr Kozlov from Russia, to search for the treasure. Though no one ever found the well, they did remove innumerable cultural relics of the Western Xia and Yuan Dynasty.

Translated by F. Huang

1. An alkalisal land in Alxa (by Wang Miao)
2. Thriving poplars showing vitality in the desert (by Wang Jian)
3. Red grassland, a rare scene in the desert (by Wang Miao)
4. Alxa is famous for its camels. (by Hasbagen)



# The Mysterious Kingdom of **WESTERN XIA**

**T**he Kingdom of Western Xia, which existed from 1038 to 1227, enjoyed a resounding name in its day. Its territory included present-day Ningxia, northwest Gansu, northern Shaanxi, northeast Qinghai, southwestern Inner Mongolia, and parts of Xinjiang and Mongolia. In this area where the Yellow River flows and the great desert sits to its north, a glorious culture developed and exerted a deep influence.

*Photos & article by Liu Xianchen, Hou Zhigang*

*Article by Junfeng*







## Rise of the Xia

The Kingdom of Western Xia mysteriously disappeared and left a baffling puzzle to later historians. Legend says that though Genghis Khan's army fought the Western Xia for 12 years he could not win. When Genghis Khan was on his death bed, he instructed his

men to avenge his death by totally wiping out the Western Xia. Eventually victorious, the Mongol army killed the people who had created the Western Xia, and destroyed their culture.

It is difficult to assess the truth of this legend. The political situation in China at the time was a triumvirate of power of the Song, Liao and Western Xia, yet Tokto, the great Yuan-dynasty historian, compiled the history of the Song, Liao and later Kin dynasties (covering the years 916-1279) but not the Western Xia. Even in the *Twenty-Four Dynastic Histories*, a gigantic work, the history of Western Xia is missing.

In the late Tang Dynasty (618-907) and during the Five Dynasties period (907-979), the Dangxiang people who originally lived around Xiazhou in northern Shaanxi prospered. Large numbers of them moved gradually to the Ningxia area. The harsh policies of the early Song Dynasty provoked their leader, Li Jiqian, to revolt and lay siege to the city of Lingzhou (Lingwu in Ningxia today) in 996. His army also defeated a Song army reinforcement transporting grain to Lingzhou.

Li Jiqian and later rulers were from the Tuoba clan, the most powerful Dangxiang tribe. They were conferred the family names of Li and Zhao, the same surnames of the Tang and Song emperors respectively. When Li Yuanhao declared himself emperor of Western Xia, he abandoned these names to show his independence. Historians, however, habitually still use Li. By 1002, Li Jiqian's army had not only seized the strategic Lingzhou, but was encroaching into the Song territory. When Li Jiqian was killed during an attack on Xiliang in Gansu in 1003, he was succeeded by his son, Li Deming.

Since the Song Dynasty was tied up in the north by the state of Liao, which supported Li Deming, Emperor Zhenzong had no choice but to acknowledge Li Deming's special status and confer upon him the title of King of Pingxi in 1006. Li Deming chose Huaiyuan (today's Yinchuan) as his capital for its strategic location. He renamed it Xingzhou and started a large-scale construction of palace halls and gates to prepare to make himself an emperor.

## Li Yuanhao, Founder of Western Xia

In 1028, Li Yuanhao, Li Deming's son, attacked the Huihu people and took Ganzhou in today's Gansu Province. When Li Deming died



1. A painting depicting Li Yuanhao, founder of the Western Xia Dynasty
2. Western Xia characters
3. The magnificent Western Xia Mausoleums (by Liu Xianchen)



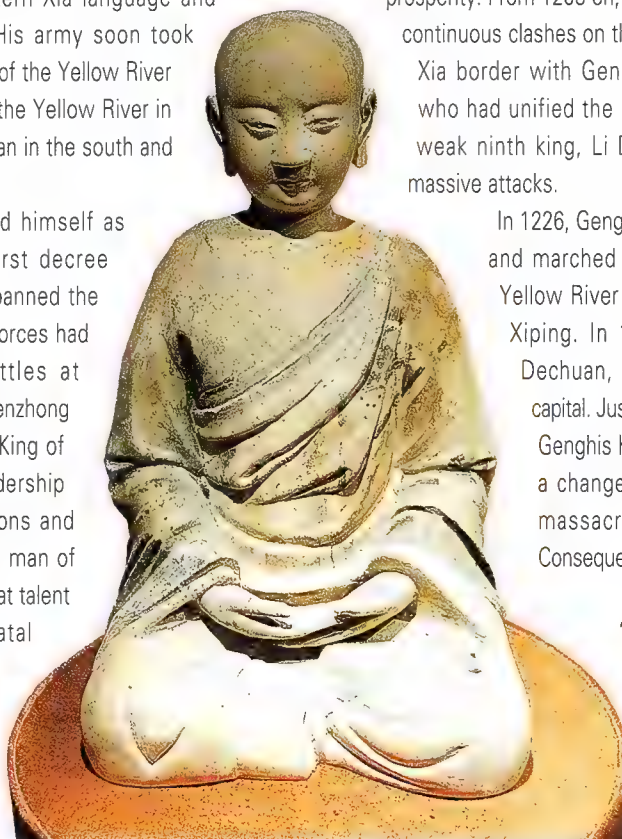


1

uniforms, created a written Western Xia language and renamed Xingzhou as Xingqing. His army soon took Guazhou, Shazhou and Suzhou west of the Yellow River and controlled a vast area, reaching the Yellow River in the east, Yumen in the west, Xiaoguan in the south and the great desert in the north.

In 1038, Li Yuanhao enthroned himself as emperor of the Great Xia. His first decree enforced shaving of the head and banned the Han-style pigtail. In 1042, after his forces had thrashed the Song army in battles at Shuichuan and Sanchuan, Emperor Renzhong had to confer upon him the title of King of Western Xia. The Western Xia leadership was passed down for 10 generations and lasted 189 years. Li Yuanhao was a man of unusual intelligence and courage, great talent and bold vision, but he had a fatal weakness for pretty women. While he was wallowing in wine and women, and worshipping the Buddha, he was assassinated by his own son in 1048. The throne

suddenly of illness in 1032, the Song and Liao courts gave Li Yuanhao the titles of King of Pingxi and King of the State of Xia respectively. Li Yuanhao ignored them and introduced a new system of government officials, designed civil and military officials'



3

was taken by his one-year-old grandson, Jingzha, and his regent mother, Lady Mozang.

In 1139, Li Renxiao became the fifth king and ruled for the next 54 years. He energetically encouraged education and Confucianism, adopted the Han written language on a wide scale and brought Western Xia to another period of prosperity. From 1205 on, there were continuous clashes on the Western Xia border with Genghis Khan, who had unified the Mongol tribes. During the rule of the weak ninth king, Li Dewang, the Mongol army launched massive attacks.



2

In 1226, Genghis Khan occupied Suzhou and Ganzhou and marched eastward across the desert and the Yellow River to take Yingli (today's Zhongwei) and Xiping. In 1227, they took Jishi and attacked Dechuan, threatening Xingqing, Western Xia's capital. Just after the Western Xia ruler surrendered, Genghis Khan died, and the Mongol army, fearing a change of mind by the king, killed him and massacred the population of Western Xia. Consequently, the Western Xia totally disappeared.

### The Oriental Pyramids

After the fall of the Western Xia Kingdom, all its palaces and mausoleums were wantonly destroyed. Luckily, the mausoleums were built on such







a gigantic scale that even the remains of their foundations still present an imposing sight. There are nine clay-mound mausoleums and about 140 accompanying tombs built into the contours of the land over an area of about 40 square kilometres from the eastern foothills of the Helan Mountains west of Yinchuan to Quanguigou in the north and the Yinchuan-Bayanhote Highway in the south. Since they resemble the pyramids in Egypt, they are called the Oriental Pyramids.

The Mongol army also removed many buried treasures. All the outside buildings were burned down and even the inscribed stones and carved bricks were broken into pieces. The Spirit Terraces, Magpie Terraces, corner towers and Spirit Walls still stand. A few years ago, archaeologists unearthed a large number of bronze cows, stone horses and dogs, porcelain ware, and gold and silver ornaments from the mausoleums. All these highly valuable relics are finely crafted in the style of the Northwest ethnic minorities.

This layout and style of the Western Xia mausoleums is a blend of its own culture and traditional Han culture. The mausoleum followed the style of the Song mausoleum in Gongxian. Each one stands as an independent architectural complex covering 10,000 square metres. Typically two Magpie Terraces and two tablet pavilions stand in symmetry outside the Spirit Wall. Inside the crescent-shaped circular wall are two stone elephants. There is a corner tower at each corner of

1. A roof decoration of the Western Xia palace (by Hou Zhigang)
2. Detail of the Western Xia palace column base (by Chan Yat Nin)
3. A statue of the Western Xia period (by Hou Zhigang)
4. The Twin Pagodas at Baisikou (by Chan Yat Nin)
5. The Museum of Western Xia (by Chan Yat Nin)
6. A mural in a grotto in Dunhuang which depicts the lifestyle of the Western Xia people (by Hou Zhigang)
7. A cliff carving with inscription of Western Xia characters found in the Helan Mountains (by Chan Yat Nin)
8. An armour coat of the Western Xia army (by Liu Xianchen)



the inner circular wall and a front gate. At the centre of the inner court is the sacrificial hall for memorial ceremonies. Behind it, to its west, is a five- or seven-storey Spirit Terrace, an octagonal pagoda built of rammed earth originally covered with wooden boards.

Unlike Han mausoleums, the Western Xia tomb chamber is not put under the mound, but underground in front of the Spirit Terrace. What we see today are only the broken inner and outer Spirit Walls and solitary Spirit Terrace, which look like village haystacks from afar.

### Western Xia Grottoes

Some written records of Western Xia were preserved in Heichengzi, which lies in Ejin Banner in western Inner Mongolia. In the early 20th century, numerous cultural relics and nearly 10,000 original Western Xia written documents, the largest number and most complete written records ever discovered in China, were found there. These documents included *New Laws Reformulated During the Tiansheng Period*, *Official Ranks and Titles*, and *Sea of Literature and Pearl in the Palm Symbolizing the Union of Fan and Han*. Regrettably, all of these important records and cultural relics were stolen and are now scattered in museums outside China.

Western Xia developed a glorious art and culture, which include grotto art, colour paintings in temples, and carved and inscribed stones. The Western Xia grottoes are mainly located in Dunhuang and Yulin in Gansu, which house many inscriptions, murals, sculptures and structures of the Western Xia. Among the Mogao grottoes, 71 were dug during the Western Xia. Eleven of the 41 existing grottoes in Yulin belong to the Western Xia period.



The Western Xia grotto murals have a distinctive style, and were painted in red, black and malachite green mineral colours and outlined in reddish brown. The larger murals were painted on a malachite green background in three colours. The colour statues of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas and Heavenly Maids all have narrow eyes, long eyebrows and high nose bridge. The Bodhisattvas wear a faint smile with their lips parted and teeth exposed. Lifelike images such as heavenly maids in noble women's clothes and the Heavenly King with a small devil under his foot demonstrate the superb skills of the Western Xia artists. In Yulin, the Cao Yijin mural vividly depicts the social life and customs in the region west of the Yellow River. One mural there tells the story of the Tang monk who journeyed to the west seeking the sutras, while







another of the Monkey King is believed to be the earliest depiction of this monkey described in the classic, *Journey to the West*, written 300 years later.

### Bell Clapper and Twin Pagodas

One of the historical sites of the Western Xia that still remains is the Xiaogunzhongkou (Small Bell-Clapping Valley), a hill at the eastern foot of the Helan Mountains, 35 km northwest of Yinchuan. As the hill is situated in a valley surrounded by mountains on three sides, it resembles a bell clapper.

Always cool in summer, the valley is a famous summer resort. After ascending the throne, Li Yuanhao built grand palaces in Xingqing and secondary palaces at the Helan Mountains. A summer palace was built in the Small Bell-Clapping Valley. Ruins of a palace with 20 halls built on Qingyangliu Hill in the valley's main ravine still exist.

Since the Western Xia rulers were Buddhist, numerous Buddhist pagodas and temples were built.

Still standing are the 108 Pagodas in Qingtongxia, Chengtian (Heavenly Mandate) Pagoda in Yinchuan and Twin Pagodas in Baisikou in the Helan Mountains.

The brick Twin Pagodas, which stand 100 metres apart, are in Jinshan Township, Helan County in a valley on the eastern side of the Helan Mountains. The Eastern Pagoda is an octagonal structure standing on a lotus flower base with its petals pointing upward. Each storey is shaped like a Buddhist dharma wheel. The Western Pagoda is outwardly similar, but more elaborately decorated with carved Buddhist images and animal heads holding rosaries in their mouths. Ruins of a great Buddhist temple lie on the western slope near these pagodas. Recently, ruins of a group of ancient pagodas, which are similar to the 108 Pagodas in Qingtongxia, have been found north of the Twin Pagodas.

### Pagoda in the Heavenly Mandate Temple

The pagoda in the Heavenly Mandate Temple in western Yinchuan, popularly known as the Western Pagoda, was first built in 1050 during the reign of Emperor Yizong. Lady Mozang ordered its construction to ensure her baby emperor had a long life and that the Li family would reign over Western Xia firmly and eternally. The famous temple of a grand scale was visited by "well-known personages from the east and enlightened people from the west" and crowded with worshippers.

The temple was rebuilt during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Although now not the original structure, it has retained the basic shape of the original Western Xia pagoda with neatly arranged arched niches on the outside walls under a green-glazed and peach-shaped octagonal roof. The temple now houses the Ningxia Museum.

1. The 108 Pagodas in Qingtongxia (by Liu Xianchen)
2. Many important cultural relics have been found at the ruins of Heichengzi in Inner Mongolia. (by Hasbagen)
3. Imitations of Western Xia structures built for the TV series, *The Western Xia Dynasty* (by Liu Xianchen)
4. A scene of *The Western Xia Dynasty* (by Liu Xianchen)
5. Inside the Western Xia Film and TV Site (by Chan Yat Nin)





Home of the Hui People

**NINGXIA**





Photos by Chan Yat Nin and Liu Xianchen Article by Hua Nian

I have travelled throughout China over the past dozen years and thought I had learned a lot about the Hui people, the most widely distributed of the ethnic minorities in China. Yet, only when I went to the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region did I truly become immersed in the culture of the Hui people. I saw mosques with the typical rooftop crescent sign everywhere. Sounds of prayers echoed in the air. Men with long beards wearing white skull caps and women with their faces hidden behind veils walked amidst signs written in zigzagging Arabic letters.

## The Origin of the Hui People

Ningxia has been designated a Hui autonomous region because one-third of its 6 million people are Hui, one of China's major ethnic groups. In other words, of the total Hui population of 8 million in China, one quarter live in Ningxia.

To trace the origin of the Hui people we must go back to much earlier times. The Hui came into existence due to



intermarriage between Central Asian Arabs, Persians and other Muslims with the Hans, Mongols and other ethnic groups in China. As early as in the seventh century, Persian and Iranian Arab merchants and seafarers began to visit China, some of them settling down. In the early 13th century, during the western expeditions launched by the Mongol army, more Central Asians, Persians

1. Inside a mosque: Muslims praying towards the direction of Mecca
2. Hui students of an Arabic school for girls (by Liu Xianchen)





and Arabs, who believed in Islam, moved into China. Eventually, a distinct ethnic group with a common belief in Islam, the Hui, emerged with language, culture, and colour and physical features of its people different from any of the original peoples.

We need to trace history back to the Western Xia Dynasty to understand why the greatest numbers of Hui people are concentrated



in Ningxia. During the Northern Song and Western Xia dynasties, most Muslims travelling eastward to reach the Central Plains from Yumen and Jiuquan went through the territory of Western Xia and many of them settled down there. The peak period of movement for the Muslims was in the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). The Mongol army returned from their western expeditions with many Muslim deportees as well as voluntary immigrants, and many stayed in the former Western Xia territory. Among the Yuan troops stationed at the strategic Mount Liupan many were Huis. Mongla, the son of Yuan-dynasty emperor Kublai Khan, was the Prince of Anxi, a domain that included Ningxia. His princely mansion was built at the foot of the Liupan Mountain. Mongla's son, Ananda, converted to Islam, and on succeeding his father as the Prince of Anxi, he spread Islam to the whole of Ningxia. Half of his 150,000 followers were Muslims.

In the early Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), masses of Huis were settled in Lingzhou (around today's Lingwu), Guyuan and other counties. By the early Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), so many Hui people had settled in Ningxia that there was the saying, "There are seven Huis and three Hans out of every 10 people." In the late Qing Dynasty, the Huis in the Northwest staged a rebellion against the central government. After the rebellion was put down, Zuo Zongtang, the Military Governor of Shaanxi and Gansu, moved 20,000 rebels to southern Ningxia's mountainous areas.

Today, most of the Hui people in Ningxia are living in the southern mountainous areas and the counties and cities of Lingwu, Tongxin, Wuzhong, Qingtongxia, Pingluo and Helan. In Tongxin, Haiyuan and Xiji counties, the Hui people make up 50 to 80 percent of the population and in Jingyuan county in the Mount Liupan area, they make up over 96 percent of the population.

### Solemn Religious Rituals

Religion dominates life in the Hui areas. There are around 2,000 large and small mosques in Ningxia. Many of the great mosques are in Yinchuan. But Islamic activities with the richest local flavour are found in the villages and small towns. With a guide, I went to Najiahu outside Yongning to see the famous Najiahu Mosque on a Friday, the Muslim day of congregational prayer. Men came in a steady stream to this very large mosque. The Han-style main hall and gate are decorated in Arabic style. The minaret, where the muezzin reads sermons and summons the faithful to prayer, has a hipped-gable roof and multiple eaves, and is flanked by a domed Arabic-style building. One of the many inscribed boards inside the mosque says, "My family left Shaanxi and moved to Western Xia", disclosing the origin of Najiahu, the Na family.

In the Yuan Dynasty, Ningxia was under the jurisdiction of the Shaanxi Administrative Area, whose governor was a Hui named Nasulading. His many sons and grandsons later dissected his name to create four new family names: Na, Su, La and Ding. The Na family





moved to Ningxia and prospered. They now live mainly in Najiahu.

A mosque consists of a prayer hall, lecture hall and ablution house. In the half hour before the prayers begin, Muslims normally perform a major or minor ablution. This is purification of the body, similar to purifying the soul with prayer. With permission, we were allowed into the sacred ablution house.

A major ablution means washing oneself from head to foot and rinsing one's mouth. A minor ablution involves washing the face and feet, touching the head with wet hands and rinsing the mouth. The Muslims conscientiously go about their task sitting around a

rectangular pool. They pour water from an ewer rather than use a bucket because they believe that water used a second time is unclean. The major ablution is done behind partitions with water from an overhead tank because they believe that flowing water is clean.

At prayer time, people took off their shoes and filed into the hall. As I was not a Muslim, I hesitated lest I should break a taboo. When the imam learned my purpose, he graciously let me in, but I had to stand behind or on the side of the people. Muslims always pray facing the direction of Mecca, Islam's most holy city, as indicated by an arched niche in the wall facing the entrance. The direction is so holy that even the imam lectures on the Koran from a pulpit on the side, never in front of this niche. The hall was quiet and solemn.

## Pilgrims to Mecca

After the prayers ended, I remained behind to look around inside the mosque. I talked with the manlas, the trainee imams, and saw the lecture hall where they studied the Koran. They spoke in Han Chinese mixed with many Arabic and Persian words, especially when referring to religious terms. Eventually, I learned that, besides the congregational prayer on Fridays, Muslims pray five times each day, at sunrise, noon, afternoon, sunset and before bed. The manlas' day starts at dawn, followed by sunrise prayers and reading of the *ketabu*, or scriptures, until noon.

The ninth month in the Islamic calendar is the

month of Ramadan, or fasting. During this month, all Muslims, except those who are on a journey or ill, do not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. This shows that they have banished all worldly desires and are devoted wholeheartedly to the true God. The first day of the 10th month is the Lesser Bairam Festival for celebrating the end of fasting.

To show that their faith comes from the bottom of their hearts, Muslims must perform five duties conscientiously. They must profess their faith, by reciting "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the Prophet of Allah;" pray five times a day facing Mecca and attend a congregational prayer in a mosque on Fridays; fast for one month in a year; give alms by paying a zakat, or religious tax, in proportion to property owned; and go on a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime if conditions permit.

Going on a pilgrimage to Mecca is the most important event in the life of a Muslim. A Muslim who has done so gains the title, Haji (pilgrim), prefixed to his surname, enjoys a higher social status and is respected by other believers. It is a very moving sight every year to see the pilgrims being sent off and greeted by their friends and relatives.

## The Akhund 'Applies the Knife'

We arrived at Tongxin on the day of a big rural fair. I soon found myself in a sea of small white Muslim caps. The fair deals mainly in farm and animal products. People came to the fair in an endless stream in horse carts, on motorcycles or crammed onto a rumbling farm tractor to buy or sell or to meet friends and relatives. Some came with their flock of sheep.

One corner of the fair is a very large meat market. Mutton is sold as soon as the sheep are slaughtered. To the Hui, the word "kill" is taboo, so they say "apply the knife" instead. It is generally an akhund,

1. A cemetery for imams in Tongxin (by Liu Xianchen)
2. The solemn service of the Corban festival (by Liu Xianchen)
3. Muslims doing ablution before attending the service
4. A slaughter must be observed by an akhund.
5. A Hui man rinsing his mouth to get ready for the worshipping
6. The muezzin calling the Muslims to come to the service





a religious official, who "applies the knife" on the sheep. He stands facing west and chants the Taimis (meaning "In the name of Allah") before the slaughter. The blood is drained because Muslims abstain from eating animal blood, and then the rest of the work is done by others. The akhunds are usually very busy on festival days like the Lesser Bairam and Corban. I heard an interesting story about a county in southern Ningxia who imported an advanced meat processing machine. However, since it is against the religious rules to do slaughtering automatically,

the processing has to be reverted back to a manual one.

At a rural market, the "five treasures of Ningxia" are everywhere. These treasures — wolfberry, licorice, Helan stone, Tan (Beach) sheepskin and nostoc — are represented by the five colours of red, yellow, blue, white and black respectively. The Tan sheepskins are, by far, the most popular items sold at the Tongxin fair. Holding a sheepskin or leading a sheep, people bargained with their fingers to indicate the prices.

### A Wedding Ceremony

The Hui people observe their festivals



according to the Islamic solar calendar, which has 12 months and an average of 354 days in each year. Though there were no Islamic festivals the month I was in Tongxin, there was, however, a Hui wedding about to take place.

From Tongxin we drove westward for about 18 kilometres to a village named Zhoujia Duantou (The Zhou Family Section Head). Most of the people in the village were named Zhou. The saying that nine out of every 10 Huis are named Ma is wrong. Li, Zhou, Jin, Liu and Chen are some of the names shared by both the Hui and Han peoples. Among the surnames belonging solely to the Hui people are Sa, Hu, Shan, Na, Hai, Hei and Su.

The village has a typical Loess Plateau topography and most of the people live in adobe or brick houses. Some adobe houses, called *gu* caves, are actually not caves but houses of rammed earth with a domed roof, which makes them look like cave dwellings. There are







also some round barns with domed roofs of rammed earth and a head-high opening.

The bridegroom's family had finished preparing the things symbolising happiness and good luck. The village akhund, who presided over the wedding from start to end, was kneeling on the new brick bed in the bridal chamber reciting the Koran. Idol worship is prohibited by Islam. Even painted and sculptured images with eyes are not allowed to be displayed. Interestingly, a picture of a lovely baby was on the wall, which seemed to mark a change in the customs.

We followed the bride-fetching vehicle to the bride's home. She was ready for the wedding — had the fine hair on her face removed, performed a major ablution, done her makeup, put flowers on her head and covered it with gauze scarf. After the akhund prayed for her, she set off for her husband's house, escorted by an even number of couples with both living parents and children, chosen from among her relatives.

The groom was a handsome young man. At the sight of the vehicle, he ran up and walked a circle around it. His relatives came out to offer congratulations. The two parties greeted each other by saying "Seliangmu". The bride had to be carried into the bridal chamber by her brother or a maternal uncle.

The elders of the two families and the village sat on both sides of the kneeling akhund. The akhund began reading a passage of the Koran and the elders followed by saying the well-wishing prayer while covering their faces with both hands. The akhund asked the groom and bride separately if they were willing to be united as husband and wife. When the answer was "yes", he earnestly instructed them to follow the teachings of the Koran, observe religious rules, respect each other and build a happy home.

The wedding ceremony was followed by a joyous banquet. Being a guest from

afar, I was invited to sit with the elders and felt highly honoured. The Hui banquet is very "democratic" — everyone simply helps themselves. The Huis observe the Islamic ban on smoking and drinking. Teasing the newlyweds in the bridal chamber, however, has no restrictions. Just about anything goes. Someone even smeared soot on the bridegroom's face before letting him enter the bridal chamber. I heard that smearing the faces of the husband's father and mother was also a popular practice.

1. Typical residential houses in the Xi-Hai-Gu area
2. Youxiang, a fried snack for celebrations (by Liu Xianchen)
3. A bridegroom receiving good wishes from the akhund
4. Muslims making contributions to their mosque (by Liu Xianchen)
5. At the end of the wedding, the bridegroom lifts the veil of his bride.
6. A corner of the Tongxin market — the area for selling brooms
7. Tan sheepskin is one of the treasures of Ningxia.

### TIPS FOR THE TRAVELLER

There are many tourist spots in Ningxia where you can see the folk customs of the Hui people. The Nanguan Mosque and Ningxia Islamic Academy in Yinchuan are the easiest to get to and are open to anyone with a ticket.

Najiahu in Yongning County, and Tongxin County have a strong Islamic atmosphere. From Yinchuan, it is a 30-minute bus ride to Yongning, 20 km away. The Najiahu Mosque, near the highway, is 1.5km west of Yongning.

Tongxin County is 217 km from Yinchuan and can be reached by bus in half a day or by train from Yinchuan, Xi'an or Lanzhou. The daily market fair in Tongxin is a good spot to observe Hui customs. Tongxin's Great Mosque is the oldest and largest mosque in Ningxia. There is also an Arabic language school in town.

The three most important festivals of the Hui people are the Holy Birthday on the 12th day of the third month in the Islamic calendar, the Lesser Bairam on the first day of the 10th month and the Corban Festival, 70 days after the Lesser Bairam. There are also the Ashura Festival on the 10th of the first month and the Fatima Festival in memory of Mohammed's daughter on the 15th day of the sixth month.

While travelling in the Hui area, it is important to observe the religious rules and folk customs. The Hui people refrain from smoking and drinking, and eating pork or using any by-products of pigs. Even the word "pig" is avoided in conversation. When the Muslims are praying, never walk in front of them. After washing your hands, do not shake the water off; dry them with a towel. Ask permission from the imam before walking into a mosque. Shorts, mini-skirts and clothes with exposed shoulders are not suitable to enter a mosque.





# Terrific Tours Through Ningxia

**L**ocated in the central inland area, Ningxia is not yet a popular tourist destination. In fact, it offers terrific tourist activities and scenic spots that are once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Apart from the desert scenes, the Yellow River culture and mysterious historic legends, tourists can see and learn about the customs of the Hui ethnic minority.

**Helan Mountains:** Lying west of Yinchuan, capital of Ningxia, the scenic mountain range is an ideal summer escape. One Western Xia king built a summer palace and Buddhist temple on an eastern slope.

The mountains have many famous passes, including the Gunzhongkou (Rolling Bell Pass), shaped like a huge bronze bell and the Baisikou (Worshipping Temple Pass) with pagodas on both sides, in addition to Suyu, Dawu and Sanguan passes. The area around the Suyukou has become a national forest park. The Helan Mountains are also famous for their ancient rock carvings.

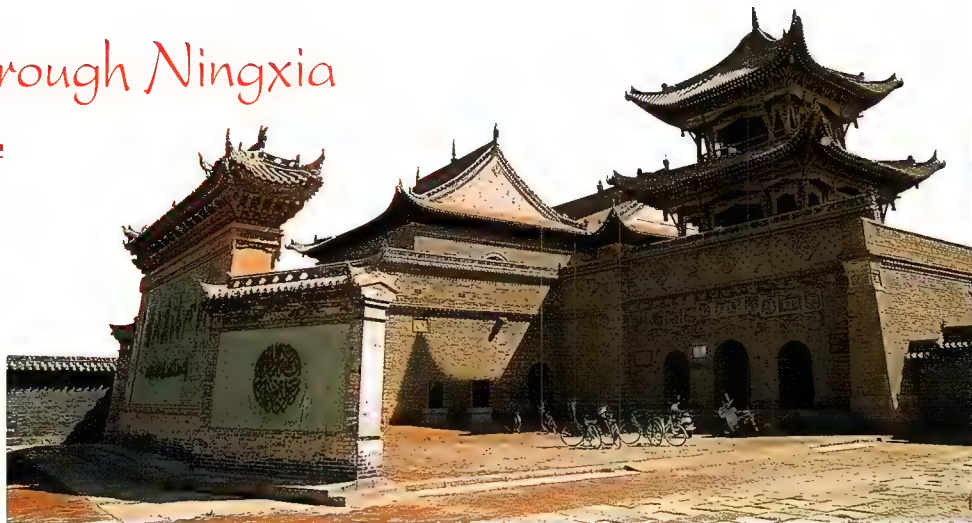
The highest peak, Aobaogeda, rises 3,556 metres. Its magnificent contours and sheer cliffs are a charming destination for climbers and scenery buffs.

**Xiao Gunzhongkou (Lesser Rolling Bell Pass):** During the Western Xia Dynasty, this was a summer resort for the royal families. Remains of over 20 sites of ancient buildings are still visible today.

This scenic area lies 35 km northwest of Yinchuan. Mountains that enclose three sides. A solitary small hill resembling a bronze bell inspired the hill's name, Bell Hill. Many monasteries were built during the Ming and Qing dynasties, but the majority have collapsed or been abandoned. Today, the Old Lord Hall, Doumu Palace and Guandi Temple still exist in the main valley. The Helan Temple, a major Buddhist holy ground, stands with its three imposing halls halfway up the hill.

**Shuidong (Water Cave) Gully:** This site in Lingwu County dates back to the Old Stone Age of 30,000 years ago. In 1920, numerous stone tools were unearthed here along with animal fossils. Further excavations in 1963 yielded traces of fire used by the early settlers. An ornament made of empty ostrich eggshell discovered here indicates a major step in the history of handicrafts development.

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. The Grand Mosque in Tongxin  | 2. Suyukou National Forest Park   |
| 3. Terraced land on Mount Liupan  | 4. 108 Pagodas in Qingtongxia     |
| 5. The Huaxia Film & TV City  | 6. The Nanguan Mosque in Yinchuan |
| 7. Western Xia Film & TV City in the Golden Water Yellow River Tourist Area |                                   |



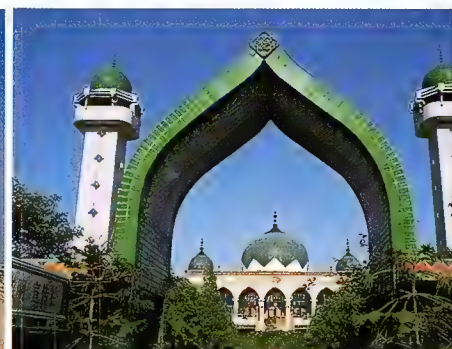
**Mount Liupan:** Mount Liupan, one of China's youngest mountains, stretches magnificently for 200 km across the border area of Shaanxi, Gansu and Ningxia. It stands both as a natural screen for the Guanzhong Plain and an important watershed in China's north. With over 700 varieties of higher plants, luxuriant vegetation and charming waters, Mount Liupan is known as the "oasis on the Loess Plateau". Atop the Mount Migang, Liupan's pinnacle rising 2,942 metres in Guyuan County, you can enjoy great views of clouds and the sunrise.

The mountain is also the origin of the Jingshui and Qingshui rivers, both part of the Yellow River system. The Jingshui origin has been developed into a scenic area with numerous attractions such as the Lotus Garden and Wudian Gorge.

**Shahu Lake:** The lake, covering 700 hectares, resembles a huge natural painting. In summer, people come for boating and swimming, and in winter, for skating and sleigh riding. The lake's large reed patches provide a safe sanctuary for birds, including cranes and swans. The contrasting 2,000 hectares of desert south of the lake is where people come for camel rides and sliding on the sand.

**Western Xia Mausoleums:** This 50-square-kilometre area includes the tombs of nine kings and 140 accompanying tombs, and is similar in size to Beijing's Ming Tombs. Despite destruction by war and natural erosion, these "Oriental Pyramids" remain a magnificent site of historic interest. Tourist facilities, including the Western Xia museum, have been constructed near Tomb No. 3.

**Huaxia Film & TV City:** Some 30 km northwest of Yinchuan, Zhenbeibu was originally a Ming-dynasty border stronghold. Since the 1980s, over 20 movies, including *The Herdsman*, *Red Sorghum* and *Song of the Yellow River* have been shot here. Movies made here thrust the Chinese movie industry into the international limelight. The permanent studio city here has become a big tourist attraction. A film museum has also been completed.









**Chengtian Temple Pagoda-Ningxia Museum:** This pagoda inside the Chengtian Temple in Yinchuan is also called the West Pagoda. The 930-year-old octagonal structure has 11 storeys and is a famous Western Xia relic. Now converted into the Ningxia Museum, it has a unique emphasis on Western Xia history. It also displays Helan rock carvings and Hui folk customs.

**Nanguan Mosque:** The original mosque built in late Ming Dynasty in Yinchuan no longer stands. The present structure was built in 1980. The mosque occupies a land of 2,000 square metres with a worshipping hall big enough to accommodate more than 1,000 people.

**Najiahu Mosque:** First completed in 1525, this is one of Ningxia's first mosques. Located in Najiahu Village in Yongning, the mosque has a worshipping hall of 1,102 square metres. Architecturally, the magnificent mosque harmoniously combines traditional Chinese styles with Islamic decorative art.

**Golden Water Yellow River Tourist Zone:** Over 200 years ago, when Qing-dynasty Emperor Kangxi personally led an expedition, he had his barracks built here. The Hengcheng Ferry has been one of Ningxia's eight famous scenes since ancient times. Visitors can view the bridge spanning the Yellow River and a Ming-dynasty fortress at Hengcheng. Recently, the Western Xia-style buildings made for the TV series, *The Western Xia Dynasty*, have attracted tourists.

**108 Pagodas:** This group of pagodas in Qingtongxia, arranged in a triangle facing east, stands on the western slope near the Yellow River Dam at the Qingtong Gorge, 76 km from Yinchuan. Their exact date of construction remains unknown but relics unearthed here carry the Western Xia script. Due to rare architectural features and the unusually large number together, they are classified as a major site under state protection.

**Shikong Temple Grottoes:** Shikong (Hollow Stone) Temple, or the Grand Buddha Temple, lies on Shikong Mountain's southern slope in Zhongning County. There are 13 caves, mostly of the Tang Dynasty, with later Western Xia and Yuan-dynasty additions. The largest existing cave, 12.5 metres wide and 25 metres high, has no pillar supports, and is called the Nine-Bay Beamless Temple.

**Gaomiao Temple:** This Ming-dynasty temple in Zhongwei, also known as the New Temple, stands out with its architectural arrangement of towers and pavilions, totaling 260 bays, on an elevated 4,000-square-metre terrace. The lower Bao'an Temple in the foreground includes the South Heavenly Gate and Grand Buddha Hall. The Five-Sacred Mountain Temple and Jade Emperor Pavilion stand at the top end. At the time, the temple served the three religious beliefs of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism.

**Shapotou:** The combination of the Tengger Desert, Yellow River and an oasis make Shapotou in Zhongwei a great tourist attraction. The Great Sand Hill, one of China's four sand dunes that produce booming sounds when people slide down them, is about 100 metres high.

**Huaxia Miracle Art City:** Neighbouring the Huaxia Film and TV City, this art centre, occupying 40,000 square metres, has a miniature world mosque collection and exhibitions of strange stones and ancient coin money. This centre features the cultures of the Western Xia, Yellow River and Islam.

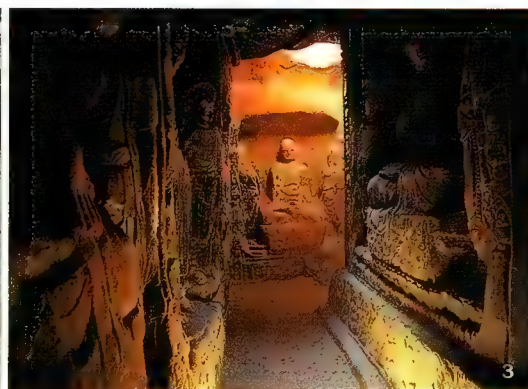
**Grand Mosque:** Located in Tongxin, this is Ningxia's oldest and largest mosque. It was first completed in the Ming Dynasty, then underwent major repairs towards the end of the 19th century. The merging

of traditional Chinese architectural style, Islamic carving technique, including brick carving, has made it an elegant and magnificent structure.

**Xumi Mountain Grottoes:** These grottoes, 55 km northwest of Guyuan and 320 km southeast of Yinchuan, date back to the Northern Wei Dynasty over 1,400 years ago. It became a massive Buddhist temple in the Tang Dynasty, with 100 caves chiselled and carved on eight hill sides during that period. About 20 sites, scattered mostly on five hills, are relatively well preserved.

*Translated by F. Huang*

1. The Najiahu Mosque
2. Gaomiao Temple in Zhongwei
3. One of the grottoes at Xumi Mountain
4. The Western Xia Mausoleums
5. Miniature famous mosques in Huaxia Miracle Art City
6. Wolfberry, the red treasure





## SPECIAL TOURIST ACTIVITIES

▼ **Sheepskin Rafts on the Yellow River:** The sheepskin raft is one of the oldest traditional means of water transport. A raft is usually made from 13 air-filled skins fastened in rows on a wood frame, though some rafts use as many as 100. Not only easy to make, they are flexible, easy to operate, and light and convenient to move. The draught is barely a dozen cm, so there is no worry of being grounded. Its most important advantage, however, is that running into rocks is not a problem. Sheepskin tourist rafts are four metres long and wide each, making them steady and safe.

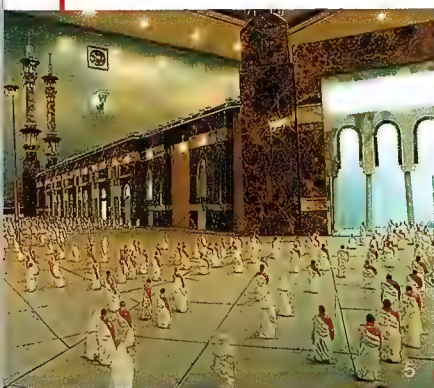
The raft ride offer special scenes along the river, including the Ming-dynasty Great Wall, ancient water mills, the river's solitary island and oasis, and farmers working in the fields. Visitors can go ashore anytime, anywhere, to take a short break on a sandy beach to pick up colourful Yellow River pebbles or have a picnic.

▼ **Sightseeing on Camels:** To ride a camel — the boat in the desert — across the Tengger Desert is a treat combining desert exploration with a chance to see the great and successful efforts made in sand control.

Camels have always been an important means of transportation in desert areas, as they can go for days without eating or drinking. Gentle and stubbornly dedicated, they can carry heavy loads over long distances. Tourists can join desert trek programmes and ride the camels. The tourists' gear is carried on the camels in specially designed bags. A tourist team will be headed by a guide and equipped with camels carrying food, tents and water.

### ▼ Tourist Routes:

- **One-day tour:** ROUTE 1: Haibao Pagoda, Ningxia Museum, Nanguan Mosque and ancient fortress at Hengcheng, in Yinchuan; ROUTE 2: Shahu Lake, Huaxia Film and TV City, cliff carvings in Helan Mountains and Western Xia Mausoleums.
- **Two-day tour:** DAY 1: Haibao Pagoda, Ningxia Museum, Nanguan Mosque, Western Xia Mausoleums and 108 Pagodas in Qingtongxia; DAY 2: Shapotou, rafting on the Yellow River on sheepskin rafts, riding camels in the desert, viewing the achievements in sand control, the desert orchard and Gaomiao Temple.
- **Three-day tour:** DAY 1: Shahu Lake, Huaxia Film & TV City, Western Xia Mausoleums, tour of Yinchuan and shopping; DAY 2: 108 Pagodas in Qingtongxia, Ming-dynasty Great Wall, Gaomiao Temple, Shapotou, rafting on the Yellow River on sheepskin rafts and riding camel in the desert; DAY 3: Grand Mosque in Tongxin, Xumi Mountain Grottoes and Guyuan Museum.
- **Four-day tour:** DAY 1: Ningxia Museum, Shahu Lake, Huaxia Film & TV City, cliff carvings in the Helan Mountains; DAY 2: Western Xia Mausoleums, Ming-dynasty Great Wall, 108 Pagodas in Qingtongxia and Gaomiao Temple; DAY 3: Jingshui River Origin Scenic Area; DAY 4: Guyuan Museum, Xumi Mountain Grottoes, Wuzhong rural market and Najiahu Mosque in Yongning.



## THE FIVE TREASURES OF NINGXIA

The natural geography of Ningxia has endowed the province with many special products. These include the five treasures — wolfberry, licorice, Helan stone, Tan sheepskin and Nostoc — which are represented by the five colours of red, yellow, blue, white and black respectively.

▼ **Wolfberry, the red treasure,** is a woody plant that is also called matrimony vine. Its bright red berry is like an agate pendant. Known for their thin skin, rich pulp, fewer seeds and fine quality, the berries are a famous traditional export item of Ningxia and used to be a tribute to the imperial court. The wolfberry is a precious Chinese traditional medicine of high nutritional value. Dehydrated dry berries are used mainly in three ways: in medicinal prescriptions, as a tea or wine infusion, and as a cooking ingredient. The berries are also sold fresh, tinned with crystal-sugar syrup and as wine.

▼ **Licorice, the yellow treasure,** is a perennial herb of the legume family. The dried licorice roots of Ningxia are known for their sturdy and straight growth, rich spongy pith, freshness and fine processing. They are exported as Xizheng licorice and have many medicinal effects, including coordinating the effects of various other herbs used in traditional medicines.

▼ **Helan stone, the blue treasure,** is quarried on the cliffs of the Helan Mountains, 2,600 metres above sea level. The smooth purple and green Helan stone is crafted to reveal the beautiful natural patterns. Its hardness is appropriate for carving into inkstones, which are well-known to conserve ink, prevent wear on the brushes and prevent fading of the ink. The Helan inkstone is one of three most famous inkstones, along with the Duan and She inkstones. It is not only a practical object of the study, but also a valuable collector's item. Helan stone is also carved into seals, paper-weights, pen-rests and other elegant objects.



▼ **The white treasure, Tan sheepskin,** are bred for their thick wool and pelts. These distinguished sheepskins are mostly pure white, but also occur in black, light brown or mixed colours. The black ones, also called purple lambskin, are rare and expensive. The white sheepskin is paper thin but strong and soft. Its glossy, pure white wool is wavy in a distinctive way, as well as soft and resilient. The long and even-length wool is a top material for blankets, shawls and scarves. The woollen blankets with distinctive embossed designs from Ningxia have long been a traditional export.

▼ **Nostoc, the black treasure,** is an edible seaweed belonging to a genus of blue-green algae. It grows in arid or semi-arid areas, sprouts after rain and is harvested in late autumn and early spring. Fresh Nostoc is blue-green or brown. After drying, it turns black like the hair, hence its Chinese name, Facai (Hair Vegetable). Nostoc is known as one of the "Eight Delicacies", and is an indispensable item at banquets. It is highly nutritious, easily absorbed, and has many uses in traditional Chinese medicine.



A large, intense bonfire burns brightly at night, casting a warm orange glow. A large crowd of people is gathered around the fire, some standing and others sitting on the ground. The scene is set outdoors, possibly in a clearing or a field. The fire is the central focus, with its flames reaching high into the dark sky. The people are silhouetted against the bright light of the fire, creating a dramatic effect. The overall atmosphere is one of a traditional festival or celebration.

CUSTOMS

# A Miao Bonfire Party in Western Hunan

Photos by Wu Jinghong Article by Zou Zhihou

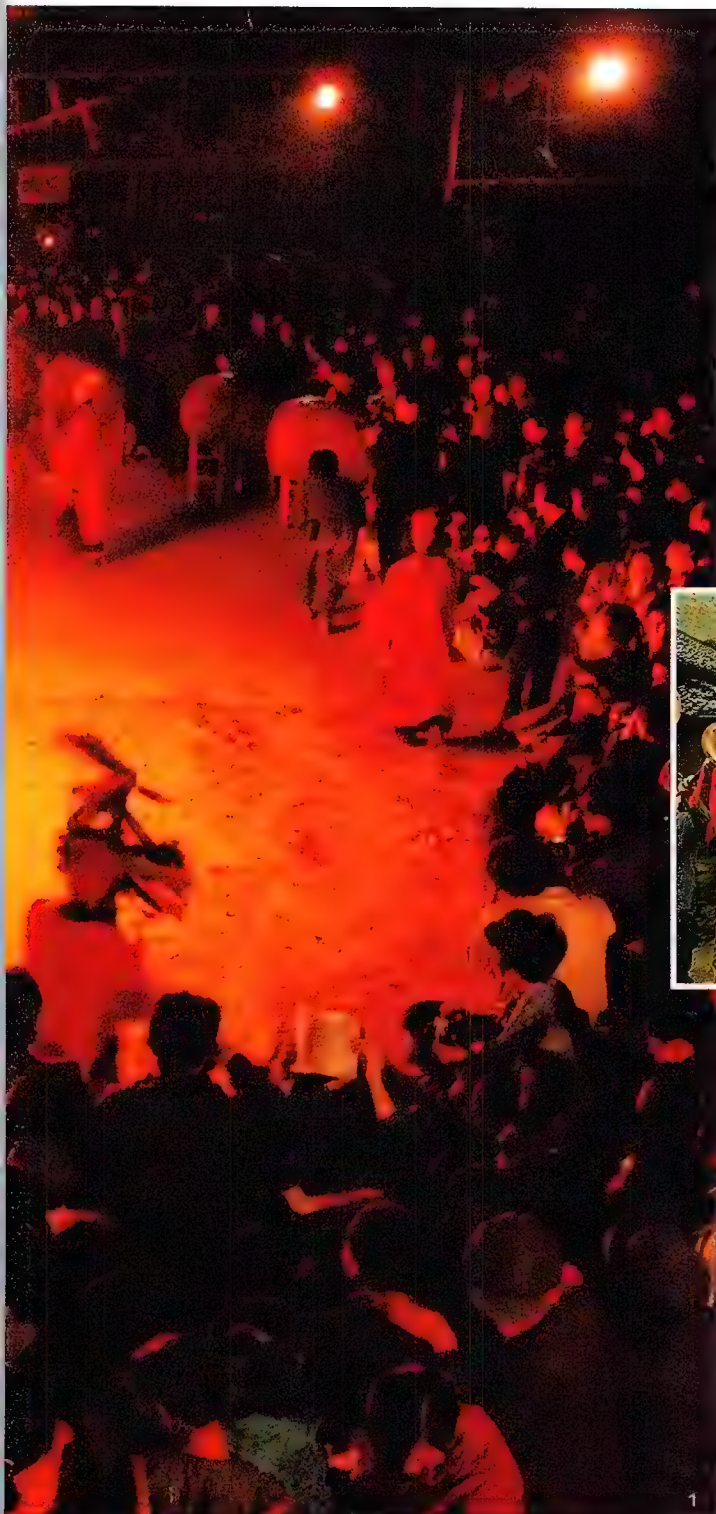
The scenic region in Jishou, western Hunan, is inhabited by the Dehang, an ancient branch of the Miao ethnic group. Hearing that they were going to hold a lively song and dance entertainment, I took a bus westward 18 km from Jishou to see it for myself.

Dehang means "beautiful valley" in the Miao language. The 28-square-kilometre scenic region on the Wuling Mountain boasts many beautiful scenes that are pleasing to the eye. They include a peak like a peacock displaying its fine tail feathers; Liusha Waterfall that drops down from a 218-metre-high cliff; Pengu Peak often shrouded in clouds and mist; and the mountain road with nine bends and 13 turns.

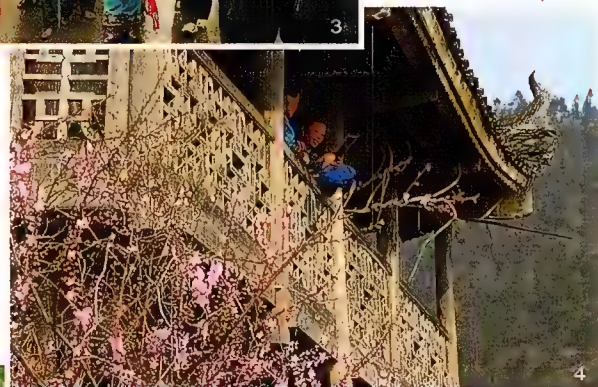
Miao houses with unique architectural style are hidden in green forests. Bamboo waterwheels squeak round by the stream as if they were singing an ancient song. Sounds of whistling tree leaves and weaving shuttles intermix with folk songs. It is really a picturesque landscape!

The welcoming ceremony strictly follows the traditional customs. The smiling Miao girls who warmly greeted us wore clothes edged with lace and embroidered aprons, colourful silk scarves and silver ornaments. Holding a long horizontal banner, the girls stood by a little bridge at the entrance to welcome us, while other villagers were beating drums, playing suona and long horns, or





1. The lively Miao bonfire party
2. Welcoming guests from afar
3. Visitors are ushered into the Miao hamlet.
4. Wooden dwelling projecting over the water
5. Using a rice leaf to make music



performing lion dances. They sang the "blocking the way" song in a simple antiphonal style. The first song expressed their welcome to the guests, who had to reply in antiphonal style; only after three rounds of such singing could the guests pass. The girls presented each guest with a big bowl of maize wine. Then amid sounds of firecrackers and gongs, we were ushered into the hamlet.

Dining on Miao-style food is usually a great enjoyment. Our table was laid with sumptuous dishes, such as traditional sour fish, sour meat, pickled vegetables, sour soup, fried peach-blossom insects and fried larvae. The girls sang songs to liven up the atmosphere and kept







1. Miao girls doing embroidery by the river (by Xie Guanghui)
2. This ancient water mill is still functioning.
3. The highway with nine bends and 13 turns
4. Catching fish in the stream
5. Bamboo waterwheels by the Dehang Stream

urging us to drink the large bowls of glutinous-rice tea and maize wine till we got tipsy.

The evening party was held at the square of the Dehang Scenic Area, which is backed by green mountains and surrounded by a beautiful stream. At nightfall, bronze cannons were fired and the bonfire was lit, its flames rising to the sky. Young men danced the *Jiujin Dance* and played the *suona*, while girls beat drums to welcome the guests.

The Miaos are an ethnic group who love to sing and dance. In daily life, whenever there are farming activities, social gatherings, weddings or funerals, there are songs and dances. Everyone can compose songs on the spot. During traditional festivals like Double Third, Double Sixth, Autumn Harvest and Welcoming the Dragon, the bonfire party goes on day and night for days. *Tagu* and *Tiaoge*, which combine song and dance, are the most popular. Sometimes martial arts, qigong and other unique skills are also included in the performances. There are also shows of climbing the knife ladder and treading on ploughshares.

As they danced, we were absorbed in the atmosphere of primitive ethnic customs. At times, visitors were invited to join the dances and their moves inevitably brought on great laughter. During the party, the young performers threw small colourful straw bundles to visitors; the ones who received them had to sing antiphonal songs with them on stage. Each of these lucky visitors were presented with a colourful band hand-made by the girls.

As we left the hamlet, profoundly happy, the young girls lit 48 torches along the road and sang the farewell song *Guests, Come Again*:

*You leave but you must return.*

*People have roads and flowers have buds.*

*The roads must be walked on year round,*

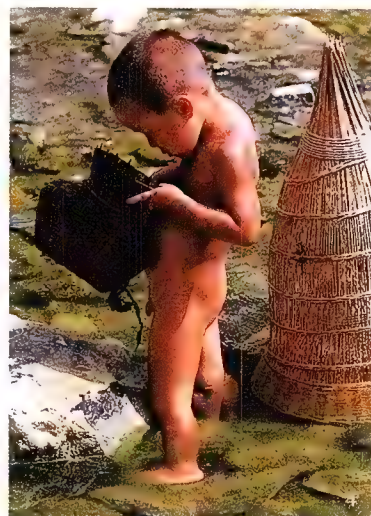
*With buds, flowers will bloom in four seasons.*

*Friends and guests from afar,*

*The Miaos welcome you to come again.*

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Translated by Xiong Zhenru







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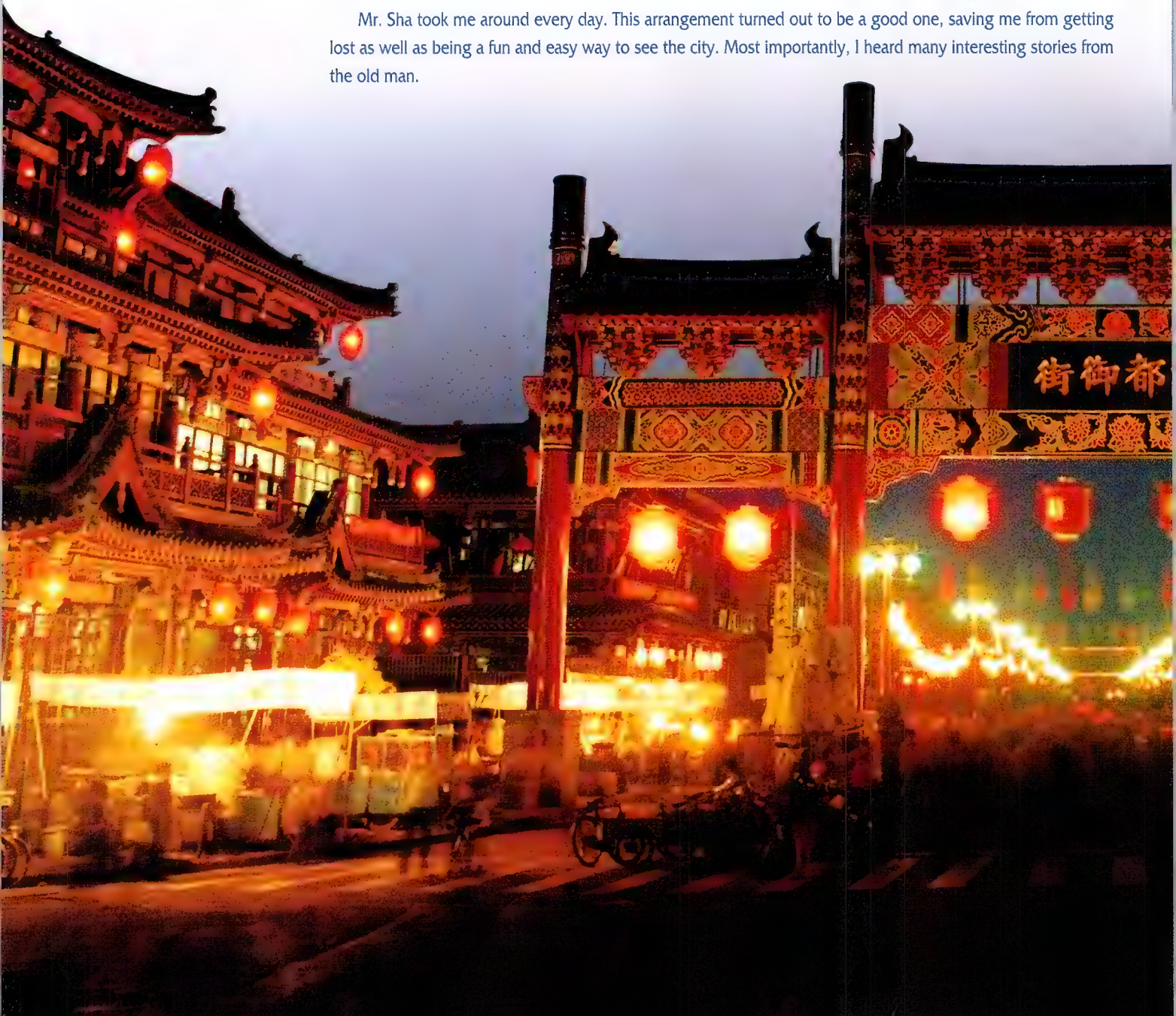
# A Pedicab Tour in Kaifeng

Photos & article by  
Xiao Gang

Kaifeng has been called Dongjing (Eastern Capital), Bianliang and Bianjing in ancient times. In the classic novel *Outlaws of the Marsh*, Bianliang was a prosperous city that captivated all the rebel heroes on Mount Liangshan. Over 1,000 years have elapsed since the time described in the novel. I went to Kaifeng to see what remains of these ancient times.

Stepping out from the Kaifeng Railway Station, I was immediately surrounded by dozens of pedicabs and drowned in shouts of "going into the city". I stepped into perhaps the oldest pedicab in Kaifeng, operated by Sha Yunguang. Already in his 70s, the old man had started pulling a rickshaw in 1945. His pedicab was 46 years old.

Mr. Sha took me around every day. This arrangement turned out to be a good one, saving me from getting lost as well as being a fun and easy way to see the city. Most importantly, I heard many interesting stories from the old man.





### City Boundary Decided by Hoof Prints

The name of Kaifeng comes from a saying of Duke Zhuang in the State of Zheng during the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.), meaning "opening up new territories". Thinking there must have been city walls, I asked Mr. Sha to show them to me. While pedaling around, he said a 10th-century Zhou-dynasty emperor had been grasped by a fantasy when he climbed the imperial city's Zhuque Tower. He ordered his general, Zhao Kuangyin, to ride around to set the city's boundary. Zhao's horse ran 24 km plus 223 steps. Walls were then built, with earth from the Sishui River valley, according to the horse's hoof prints. Later, Zhao Kuangyin usurped the throne and founded the Song Dynasty (960-1279). Taking Kaifeng as his capital, Zhao ordered the city expanded and the curved outer walls built.

During the reign of Emperor Huizong, the prime minister, Cai Jing, held enormous power and requested to have the city walls rebuilt. The original serpentine walls were straightened, making the city into a neat oblong shape. Despite the better shape, the walls were not solid. Soon after, the Jin troops from the north surrounded the capital, bombarded the western walls and captured the city with little effort.

Zhu Yuanzhang, the Ming Dynasty's founding emperor, also ordered the city to be rebuilt. The imperial edict stated that "the three hills must not be exposed and the five city gates must not face each other". This would minimise danger from outside and prevent the city's good fortune, which came in from the central west gate, from being lost.



1. A red-canopied pedicab in front of the Bao Zheng's Temple
2. The ginkgo wood 1,000-Hand and 1,000-Eye Buddha in the Octagonal Pavilion of the Xiangguo Monastery
3. "Imperial Song Street", which was the commercial centre of the Song-dynasty capital (by Cai Zhongqing)





Wars, floods and man-made damage have combined to destroy all five city gates. Only some dilapidated walls remain. Looking up from the Gezi (Pigeon) Market, visitors can find some traces indicating the prosperity of the Northern Song capital city.

### The Seven-Dynasty Capital Buried by Silt

Kaifeng has often been called "the Seven-Dynasty Capital", meaning that seven dynasties had taken Kaifeng as their capital. Yet there seemed little in the city to show it.

I asked Mr. Sha for an explanation. Pointing to the ground, he explained that the old city was buried under silt from floods long ago. Then, he pedaled to downtown Zhongshan Road, where the ruins of Zhouqiao Bridge of Northern Song were being excavated, but at this moment there was little to see. The

bridge is buried four metres underground. In the Northern Song Dynasty, Zhouqiao Bridge was renowned for its night market and scenes on moon-lit nights. It was also where the impoverished Yang Zhi, an outlaw hero on Mount Liangshan, sold his precious sword.

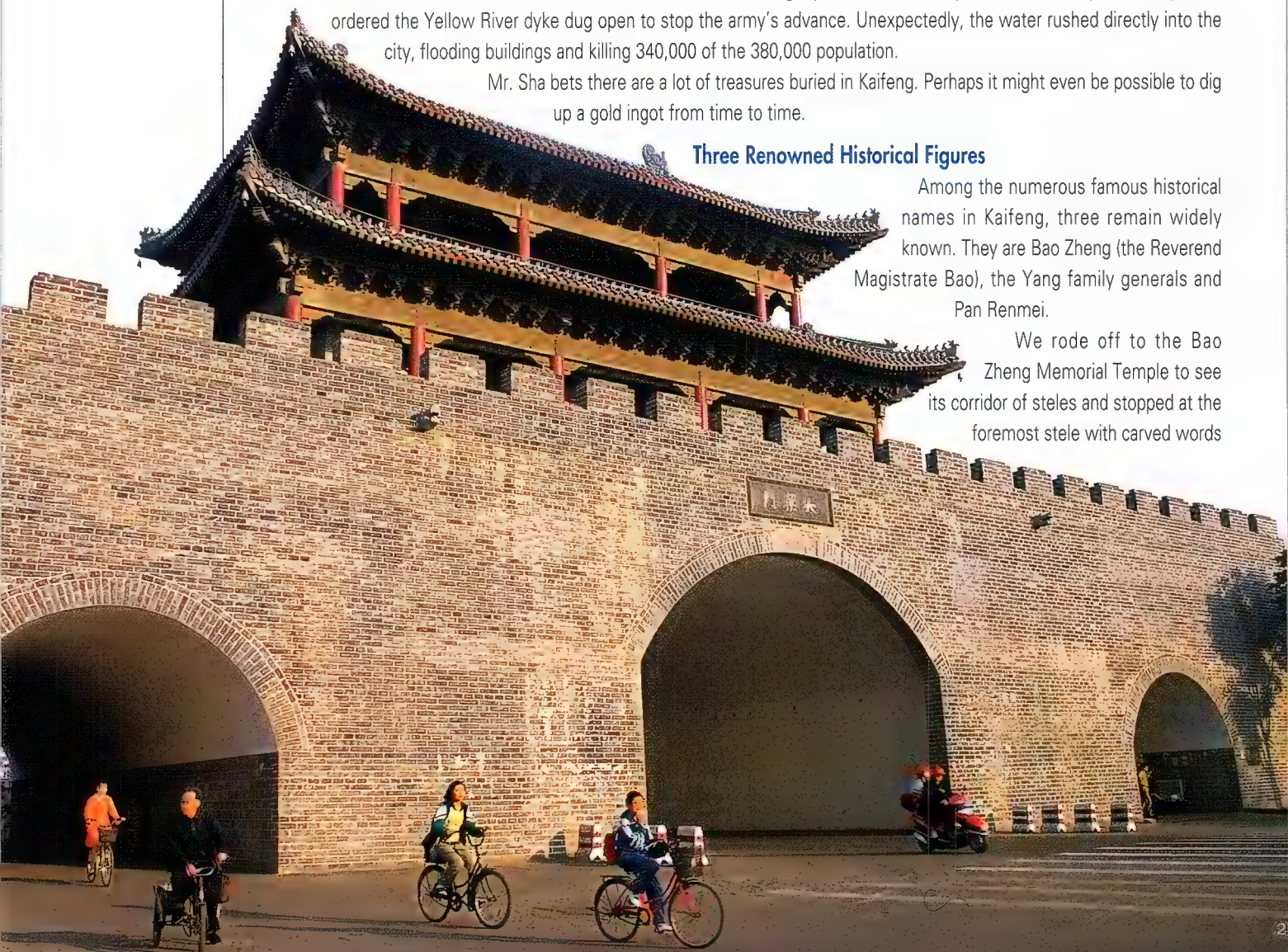
Situated on the banks of the Yellow River, Kaifeng has benefited from the Yellow River, but it has also suffered damage caused by it. The bed of the Yellow River is several metres higher than the fields around Kaifeng. Over the past 800-odd years, the river has burst its banks on at least 120 occasions, and the city was submerged seven times. There have also been some man-made disasters. When Li Zhicheng's peasant rebel army attacked the city, the Ming court ordered the Yellow River dyke dug open to stop the army's advance. Unexpectedly, the water rushed directly into the city, flooding buildings and killing 340,000 of the 380,000 population.

Mr. Sha bets there are a lot of treasures buried in Kaifeng. Perhaps it might even be possible to dig up a gold ingot from time to time.

### Three Renowned Historical Figures

Among the numerous famous historical names in Kaifeng, three remain widely known. They are Bao Zheng (the Reverend Magistrate Bao), the Yang family generals and Pan Renmei.

We rode off to the Bao Zheng Memorial Temple to see its corridor of steles and stopped at the foremost stele with carved words







stating "Autograph of Kaifeng Prefecture". Mr. Sha said, "Only this one is authentic, the others were lost in the floods." So many visitors have touched the stele to pay their respects to Bao Zheng over hundreds of years that his name is indiscernible. This stele is also the only Northern Song stele left in Kaifeng.

Between the Wuchao (Noontime Tribute) Gate and the main hall of Longting (Dragon Pavilion) there are two lakes facing each other — the Pan Family Lake and Yang Family Lake. On reaching this area, Mr. Sha related a folk legend about the lakes. After Yang Ye, the first-generation Yang family general, was killed by Pan Renmei, Yang's wife left Kaifeng and returned to her family's ancestral home. Soon after her departure, a great storm hit Kaifeng and lasted three days, changing the Yang and Pan mansions into two lakes. Because the Yang family was loyal and righteous and the Pan family was crafty and treacherous, the Yang Lake water is clear and the Pan Lake water is muddy.

### Site of the Ancient Palace

North of the Yang and Pan lakes is a park situated in the ruins of the ancient imperial



palace that had served seven dynasties. Structures that once housed all the central government and military departments stand inside the Xuande Gate. The squares in front of the Xuande Tower and outside the Donghua Gate were where the emperors reviewed the imperial guards and enjoyed the lantern show during the Lantern Festival.

Most of the palace buildings were destroyed by floods and war. In the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Kaifeng officials built the Longting Pavilion and Longting Hall over the man-made hill to house the shrines of Qing emperors.

The black stone mound in the Longting Hall is said to have once been Zhao Kuangyin's seat. Hoof marks over the stone way carved with coiling dragons in front of the hall are believed to be left by Zhao's horse when he ascended the throne riding a horse.

### Xiangguo Monastery

The Xiangguo Monastery, which was mentioned several times in *Outlaws of the Marsh*, is still there and remains as prosperous. This monastery began its life over 1,400 years ago as the Jiangguo Monastery in the Northern Qi Dynasty (550-577). Later, after some destruction by a fire, it became the residence of a local army officer. In the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the monastery was rebuilt and renamed as Xiangguo by the Ruizong Emperor, who was once Prince of Xiang. The four characters *Da Xiang Guo Si* (Great Xiangguo Monastery) on the board were written by the emperor.

The monastery is most famous for its 1,000-Hand and 1,000-Eye Buddha carved from a single piece of ginkgo wood, which sits in the Bajiao (Octagonal) Pavilion under the Luohan (Arhat) Hall.

### A Rare Taoist Relic

My next stop was the nearby Yanqing Temple. Called Chongyang Temple originally, this Taoist temple was built in memory of Wang Chongyang, founder of the Quanzhen Sect of Taoism. Though small, in the history of Taoism, it is as important as the White Cloud Temple in Beijing and the Yongle Palace in Ruicheng, Shanxi Province.

1. A passage to the Longting Pavilion divides the Yang and Pan lakes. (by Shi Baoxiu)
2. Kaifeng's ancient West Gate Tower
3. Imitations of Song-dynasty structures on the ruins of the former imperial compound
4. The wood-wheeled cart used to build the city wall under the rule of Zhao Kuangyin





The temple's most notable structure is the Yuhuang (Jade Emperor) Pavilion. This solid octagonal pagoda with colourfully glazed tiles shows rare Taoist architecture. The structure follows the Yuan-dynasty style, as evidenced by the brick-laying in the arched roof of the ground floor as well as the lion-riding Mongol warriors inlaid on it. Obviously it was renovated in the Yuan Dynasty when the temple was named Wangong Palace by the emperor.

### Enigma of the Iron Pagoda's Height

Our last stop of city tour was the Iron Pagoda in the northeast. I had heard there were two tall pagodas in the city, and that one of them, the Iron Pagoda, was only half as high as the other, the Fanta Pagoda.

The Iron Pagoda, which resembles a needle shooting into the sky, is 55.88 metres high. Its lower levels are still buried in silt, relieving it of some of its magnificence. It is not actually made of iron, but its outer glazed bricks have a rusty iron colour. This pagoda appears much higher than Fanta.







From the top of its winding steps we could see the Fanta Pagoda in the distance. Built 1,000 years ago, it is the oldest structure in Kaifeng. The pagoda is a strange structure consisting of a solid three-storey hexagonal base with a much smaller six-storey pagoda on the top, barely 20 metres high. Mr. Sha smiled and explained the enigma. The pagoda was originally so tall that when the whole city turned dark at sunset, the pagoda's top remained bright. It became shorter after being struck by lightning. Then, when Zhu Yuanzhang founded the Ming Dynasty, he ordered another section of the pagoda cut down to "remove the dignity" of Kaifeng, capital of the previous dynasties.

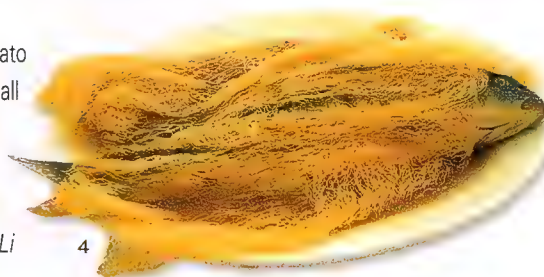
### Kaifeng Delicacies

The extravagance of the former imperial courts and rich businessmen of Kaifeng has graced the city with a great number of appetising delicacies.

One of the famous local dishes is called Fine Noodles with Carp. One of the dishes the Song-dynasty emperors would offer visiting foreign envoys, the fish is sweet and sour, and very tender, in contrast to the fine crispy noodles.

Another famous traditional local dish is called Four Birds, which was created by the Chen family in the Qing Dynasty when they entertained the visiting Empress Dowager Cixi. The boneless quail, pigeon, chicken and duck are stuffed one inside the other in that order. When the dish is served, all you can see is the duck in soup. Keep eating and you eventually get down to the quail filled with delicacies of every kind.

The most indigenous dish is sweet potato paste. The peeled potatoes are cut into small pieces, and mashed with sesame oil and sugar into a paste. This simple orange delight tastes marvellous.



Translated by Z. G. Li

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### Tips for the Traveller

- Transport:** Pedicabs in the downtown area cost 2 to 3 yuan per trip. A chartered pedicab costs 40-50 yuan per day. Taxis cost five yuan for the initial 3 km; one yuan per km thereafter.
- Lodging:** Dongyuan Hotel \*\*\*: Standard room: 288 yuan; Kaifeng Guesthouse \*\*: Standard room: 160 yuan.
- Restaurants:** Kaifeng No. 1 Stuffed Bun Restaurant (famous for steamed stuffed buns); Youyixin Restaurant (famous for carp noodles); Swan Restaurant; Qingfeng Canteen; Daoxiangju (famous for chicken dumpling soup).
- Shopping:** Local handicrafts include Bian embroidery, featuring details of the famous Song-dynasty painting *Qingming Festival at the Riverside*; ceramics from the Northern Song Guan Kiln Institute; woodblock New Year paintings of Zhuxian Town; and paintings and calligraphy by the Jingguzhai Studio.



1. The Song-style snack night market close to the Drum Tower
2. The Fanta Pagoda, the oldest existing Northern Song structure
3. In the Song Dynasty, Fanlou Tower led all other restaurants in the capital. It became well-known for the romantic affair between Emperor Huizong and the famous courtesan Li Shishi.
4. Fine Noodles with Carp, a famous dish from the imperial kitchen
5. A restaurant on the "Imperial Song Street"

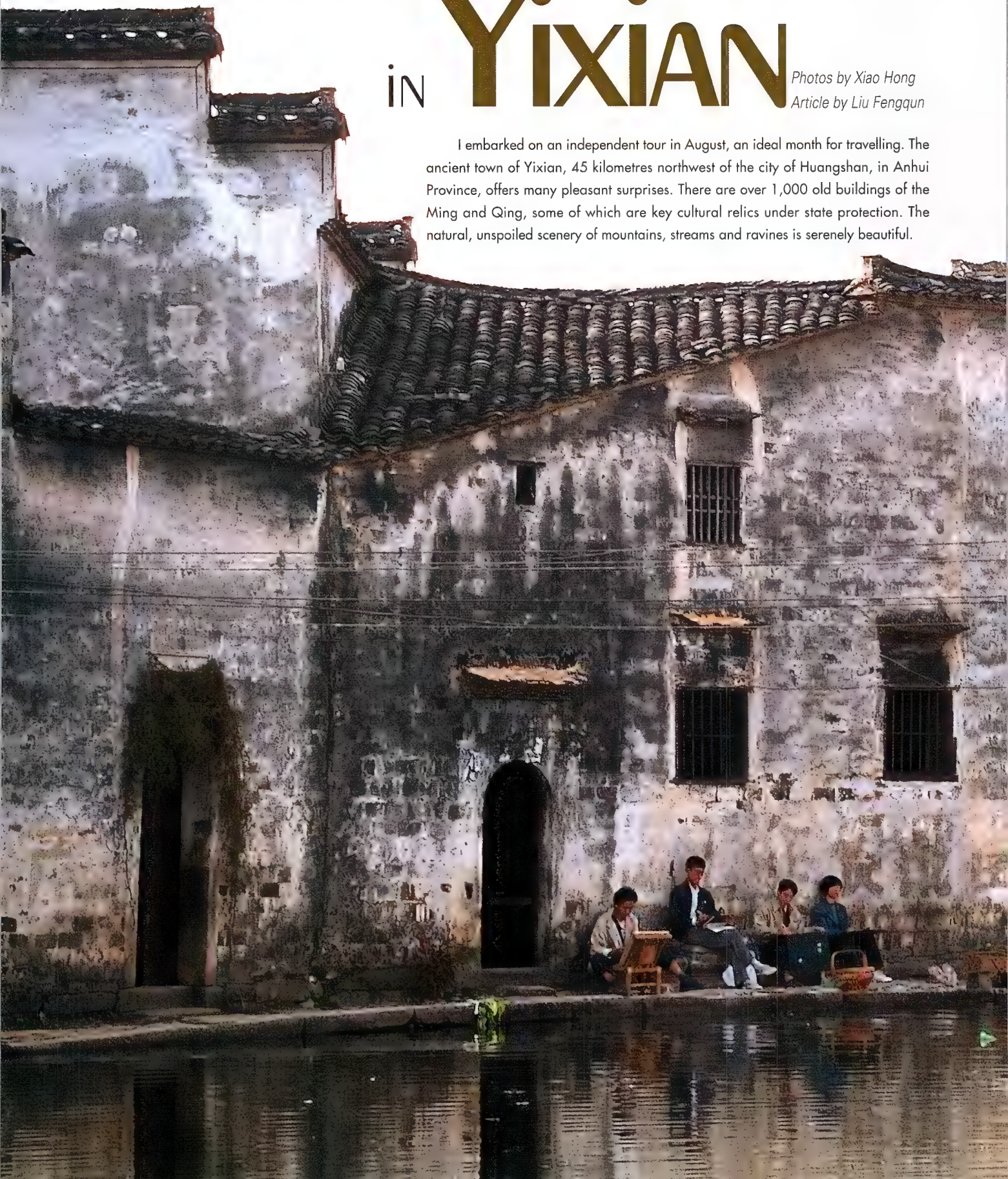


ON THE WAY

# IMPRESSIONS Old HOMES in YIXIAN

*Photos by Xiao Hong  
Article by Liu Fengqun*

I embarked on an independent tour in August, an ideal month for travelling. The ancient town of Yixian, 45 kilometres northwest of the city of Huangshan, in Anhui Province, offers many pleasant surprises. There are over 1,000 old buildings of the Ming and Qing, some of which are key cultural relics under state protection. The natural, unspoiled scenery of mountains, streams and ravines is serenely beautiful.











## Xidi Village, A Tourist Hot Spot

After descending Mount Huangshan, I headed for the ancient town of Yixian on a minibus. As all the other passengers on the bus were locals, they looked at me, a female tourist from Hong Kong, with curious but friendly eyes. When the driver heard where I was going, he suggested that I first visit Xidi, a village known for its Ming and Qing buildings. Seeing my hesitation, he mentioned other reasons why I should go and the passengers all agreed. As we were talking, the bus arrived at the village, and moved by the driver's sincerity, I decided to take a look. Before driving away, the

driver said his bus would pass here two hours later and pick me up. After thanking the driver, I bought a ticket to enter the village.

Ming and Qing dwelling houses painted black and white are packed in neat rows. Some elderly people sat alone outside the houses cooling themselves while the women washed clothes in the streams or cooked at

home. Children played here and there. They paid no attention to the tourists, perhaps because they have seen too many. The front doors of all the houses are wide open for tourists to enter. I walked into one and found the structure unusual. There is an opening in the roof to let in sunlight and catch rain water. Geomantically, this represents the collection of wealth. The wooden beam, a fine Ming-dynasty work, was beautifully carved. On the ground floor are the kitchen and living room, and upstairs are bedrooms. The skylight allows people upstairs to see whoever is in the living room, but not the reverse since it is darker upstairs. In ancient times, a young lady in the house was not allowed to meet strangers. When a visitor or her betrothed was in the hall, she could only peep at him from upstairs.

With the development of tourism, the village has become commercialised. The halls of every house facing the main street are now antique shops selling their collector's items and household articles, mostly in jade and wood. The prices are by no means low. Visitors who wish to take a photo of any house's interior have to pay one yuan to the owner.

### Previous page:

1. The old dwellings in Hongcun, Yixian County, are cleverly laid out among bubbling streams and clear ponds.
2. Stone arches in Tangyue, Shexian County
3. Ming- and Qing-dynasty houses in Hongcun Village, Yixian

### This page:

1. One of the gorgeous houses built during the Ming and Qing dynasties by Anhui merchants (by Xie Guanghui)
2. The Yang Family's Dye House in Nanping, Yixian, where the main scenes of the movie *Ju Dou* was filmed





## PICTURESQUE HONGCUN VILLAGE



After spending a long time in Xidi Village, I got on the previous minibus and headed for Yixian, which took only about 10 minutes. On the busy main street I made inquiries and learned that there are many old villages in Yixian. A motorcycle taxi driver came over to ask where I was going. When I showed him the

The whole village has been constructed according to geomantic principles. With mountains behind and water in front, the crescent lake and bridge symbolise a bent bow with the arrow about to be shot, which is supposed to promise good fortune. The houses, also with white-washed walls, dark gray roof tiles, finely carved beams and skylight, are all geomantically laid out. A stream coming from the mountain provides each household with water for drinking and daily use. As the water flows continuously, there is no sediment nor dirt in it. Running water also stands as a symbol of wealth flowing into the family.

I tried to take a photograph of the local women doing their washing in the stream but was stopped by the guide. He said that I should not disturb the daily life of the local people. I felt ashamed of myself. Tourists should look upon novel things with an open mind and respect them by allowing them to remain undisturbed.

The natural atmosphere of these ancient villages certainly lived up to their reputation and warmed the heart of this solitary traveller.

only map I had with me, he cried out, "It's Hongcun. Get on."

After about 20 minutes, I arrived at the exact place illustrated in the photograph on my tourist map. A crescent-shaped man-made lake divides the village in two, connected by a small bridge. There are undulating mountains behind the village. The scenery is excellent. No wonder the picturesque and peaceful village has drawn many art students here to do sketches.

Entering the village, I was told to wait till a group of at least three persons was assembled. After a while no-one else arrived, so the guide took me on a person-to-person guided tour, starting from the bridge at the village entrance.

3. Nanping Village in Yixian has become one of the hot tourist spots.  
4. Lifelike figures carved on the wood moulding between the beam and pillar in an old house



Sketch Map of Villages at the Foot of Mt. Huangshan



### Tips for the Traveller

two hours to reach the Mount Huangshan Scenic Area. A minibus leaves from the foot of Mount Huangshan to Yixian; it takes one hour and a ticket costs 11 yuan. Buses run between Yixian and Shexian, where visitors can see the Xuguo Arches and the stone arches in Tangyu.

There are buses from the Suhang Hotel at Tianshui Bridge in Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang Province, to the Thousand Islands in Chunan, which takes about four hours and costs 25 yuan. In Chunan there is a passenger boat that departs at 6:30 a.m. and reaches Shendu in Shexian, Anhui, at about 3:00 p.m. It is an hour's ride in a minibus to reach the county town of Shexian.

The entrance ticket to the Xidi Village is 26 yuan and that to Hongcun Village, 20 yuan.

There are regular flights from some major cities in China to the city of Huangshan (Tunxi). There is a bus from the airport that takes



# Exquisite Paper-Cuts from Western China

Photos & article by Liu Hui

*The paper-cut is an old folk handicraft art that has been done for over 1,500 years in China. Originally it was created for religious and ritual activities, but later it developed in juxtaposition with the life of the people. Today it has become a unique art form of its own, and has developed from single-coloured to multi-coloured.*

## A Paper-Cut Master

It was in the Yellow-River Rare Stones Exhibition Hall in Lanzhou, capital of Gansu Province, that I saw the multi-colour paper-cuts for the first time. As I entered the hall, a colourful, lifelike dragon came into sight. Among dark clouds, the dragon wriggled a body covered with red scales, its sharp dark claws brandished, purple feelers waving and grey horns raised, as if it would dash out of the window into the blue sky at any moment. The fluent line of drawing, elaborate craftsmanship of the cutting and unique colouring deeply attracted me. Just as I was imagining that this artist must have particularly delicate hands, a man of bold and unreserved character walked up to me, rubbing his big strong hands. His appearance seemed to indicate western China ancestry. He was none other than the paper-cut master and folk artist, Ye Changyou.



## Delicate Technique and Bold Style

In fact, Ye Changyou is not a native of Gansu. He was born into a paper-cut artist's family in Yangzhou, a beautiful city in East China's Jiangsu Province, where the folk art of paper-cutting and paper-engraving has been widespread for 1,000 years. Through the elaborate study and research by artists over many generations, the

distinct Yangzhou style was formed, with delicate and novel designs, fluent and exquisite line cutting, and beautiful lifelike images. Ye learned scissor-cutting as a child and eventually trained and developed his dexterous hands. Later, he left his picturesque homeland and went to teach in the Northwest, where the profound Yellow River culture gave him great inspiration. He combined the elegant Yangzhou paper-cut art with the bold and unrestrained lifestyle in Northwest China and produced a large number of beautifully conceived art works. His works won many prizes at the paper-cut exhibitions in China and have been collected by fans both at home and abroad.

## Creating New Forms of Paper-Cuts

In recent years, after studying the different kinds of paper-cuts, Ye Changyou decided to concentrate on research of the dot-colour paper-cut of theatrical masks and the monochrome paper-cut of the figures from the Dunhuang murals.

The so-called dot-colour means dyeing paper-cuts in different colours. Usually, folk artists put some white wine into the dyestuff to increase the permeability. A dozen pieces of paper-cuts can be dyed at one time, if the paper-cuts are made





of the Xuan paper or the fine paper made from bamboo. Through experiments over the years, Ye Changyou invented a new dyeing technique by making paper-cuts in Xuan paper and dyeing them with dyestuff made of ores and wild plants. As the dot-

colour paper-cut is bright and most suitable to depict the themes that demand rich colours and clear layers, Ye Changyou chose the traditional Chinese theatrical masks as his subject. He plans to work out a large series of theatrical mask paper-cuts within a few years.

Ye Changyou believes monochrome paper-cut, which has a lucid and lively style and a strong colour contrast, is more suitable for cutting the vivid Dunhuang mural figures. His work *Avalokitesvara* is such an example. By applying a special



time training young artists. After years of effort, he has trained students from various places in the Northwest, including Gansu, Qinghai, Shaanxi and Ningxia. He is now widely known as "the marvellous paper-cut artist".

Translated by Xiong Zhenru

### Paper-cut Themes and Designs

Traditionally, Chinese paper-cuts were used as house decorations for festival celebrations, elimination of evil and blessings, and as gifts. Paper-cuts with different themes have different meanings. When a girl was getting married, her parents would give her a set of paper-cuts depicting the "24 Filial Pieties" to remind her to show filial obedience to her parents-in-law; meanwhile her sisters would send her paper-cuts of *Bowls and Fish Swimming Among Lotus* to wish her a happy life.

Paper-cuts demand connection of strokes. When a figure's head is cut, the eyes, ears, mouth, nose and eyebrows must be linked with one another. So these facial features are exaggerated.



technique to augment the different shades of the colour, he has highlighted the face and upper body. The figure appears delicate, yet animated. With the traditional technique, Ye Changyou has brought the Dunhuang mural figures to life.

### Training Young Artists

While putting out a lot of energy to produce many wonderful art works, Ye Changyou has also spent a lot of



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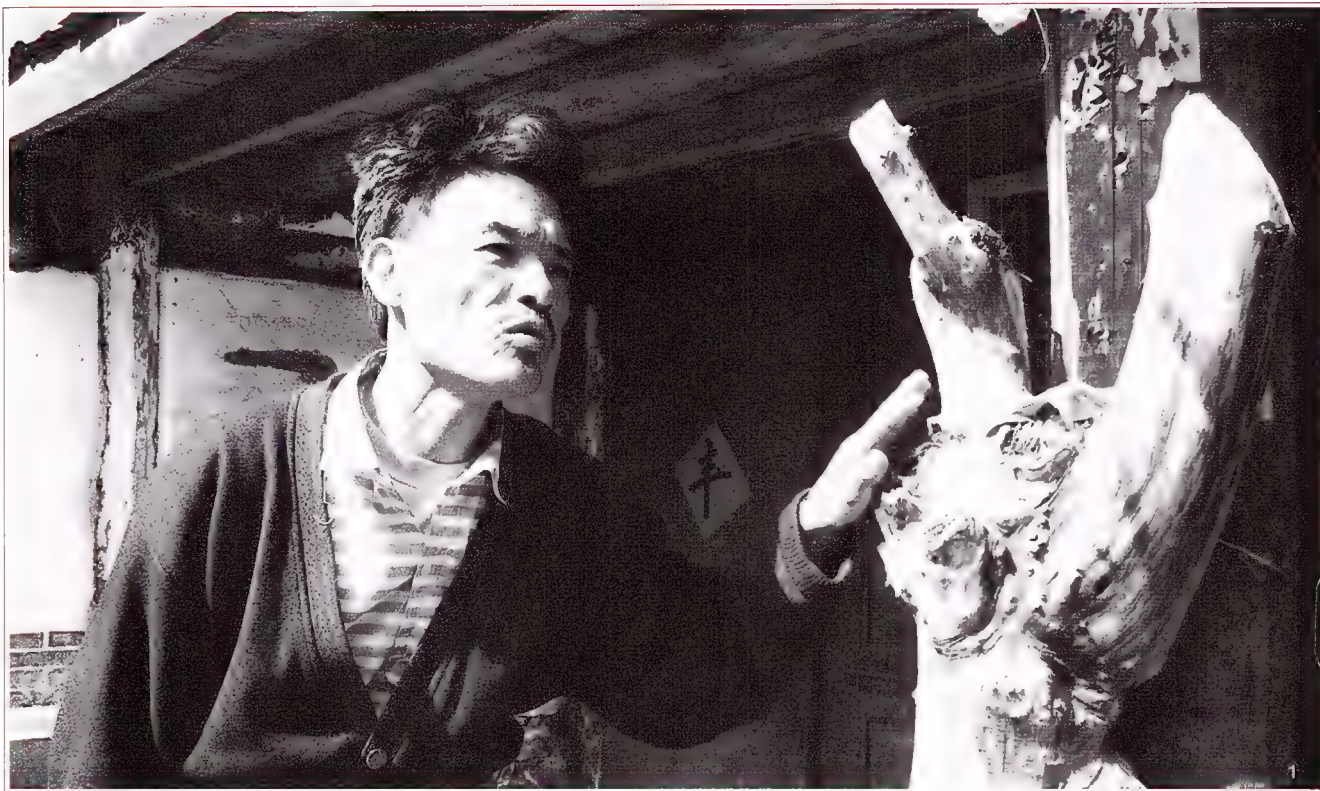
### Meanings of Traditional Designs

- Dragon:** suppresses evil, shows prowess and male heroism
- Phoenix:** suppresses evil, implies grace and heroism in women
- Bat:** implies happiness and fortune
- Monkey:** refers to human ancestry and longevity
- Tiger:** exorcises evil spirits and protects life
- Elephant:** implies flourishing and prospering
- Peach:** longevity and good harvest
- Fingered citron:** Buddha, happiness and longevity
- Ruyi:** implies satisfaction
- Military book and sword:** exorcises evil spirits and devils

1. *Dragon*, a dot-colour paper-cut
2. Ye Changyou (second from right) demonstrates his paper-cut technique.
3. *Butterflies Flying Amidst Flowers*, the second-prize winner of the China Folk Paper-cut Exhibition
4. *Painted Pottery*
5. *Figure from Dunhuang murals* — a monochrome paper-cut

5





# The Last Dongba Paper-Maker

*Photos & article by Shui Xiaojie*

One cool summer afternoon in the ancient city of Lijiang, Yunnan Province, the nearly 50-year-old He Shengwen met another Dongba man, He Jigui, now over 70 years old, who told him that the special Dongba paper had long vanished and it would be nice if he could produce it again.

The next day, He Shengwen received similar encouragement from the Dongba Culture Research Institute in Lijiang. Since the traditional Dongba paper-making technique was an important part of the Dongba culture which should be carried on by the current generation, he accepted the task and immediately returned to his home village 100 km away, the mountainous Kenpeigu Village at the foot of the Yulong (Jade Dragon) Snow Mountain. At an altitude of 2,600 metres, the village has the famous Hutiao (Tiger Leaping) Gorge below it and

the Yulong Snow Mountain above it. With the highest peak at 5,596 metres above sea level, the snow-capped Yulong is a holy place — the Yulong Third Kingdom, or Heaven — to the 300,000 Naxi people.

## Missing an Ancient Technique

Kenpeigu Village is nestled in a pine forest where the golden monkey, an endangered species under state protection, is often seen. As a special plant, which supplies the material used in making Dongba

paper, grows in the area, this village used to be the production centre of Dongba paper in ancient times. The unique Dongba paper made with ancient skills could be kept for 1,000 years, immune to moths. The paper was used mainly for writing Dongba scriptures, as well as land contracts, and in making kerchiefs.

Dongba characters have been passed down from generation to





generation for thousands of years through the scriptures. The pictograph Dongba written language, which is still in use, is the only one of its kind that can be read today. Therefore, it is referred to as the living fossil of language in the history of world culture. During the "cultural revolution", many Dongba scriptures were burned, which has led to the current situation where more Dongba scriptures are preserved in foreign countries than in China. After this destruction, the Dongba paper, which had been used to copy the scriptures, gradually disappeared, even in Kenpeigu, its former producer.

Since 1990, when an awareness of the Dongba culture started growing again, the government organised groups to search for the technique of paper-making, but all their efforts were fruitless. The group had also gone to Kenpeigu, but did not encounter He Shengwen.

### Tradition Finally Restored

When He Shengwen agreed to produce the paper, he believed it could be done because the raw material is easily found all over the mountains, and his village had a long history of paper-making. Although production had stopped for several decades, he could get help from his elderly father-in-law, who had witnessed the whole production process. Unexpectedly the old man refused his request, saying that He would be poor the rest of his life if he involved himself in paper-making. It took He three days, with the help of his mother-in-law, to convince the old man to teach him.

With the help of his father-in-law, He reconstructed the production tools and facilities. He also recounted the details of the materials and skills of paper-making. Then He climbed the mountains with his wife to collect the raw plant. About 20 days later, they were ready, and production began on a sunny morning. In the beginning, all seemed to go smoothly, yet production was held up at the last stage — pasting the paper onto a wooden plate to dry it. The problem was that the paper kept falling off the plate. They added more pulp and then there was too much and the paste would not spread. They tried again and again, until they finally succeeded at sunset.

On the second day, they produced only two pieces of paper. On the third day, they produced 10. He Shengwen made a total of 23 pieces of Dongba paper and he sent the paper to Lijiang where it was accepted by experts and some old Dongba people who had seen it decades before. The traditional Dongba paper-making technique had been restored.

### The Dilemma of Development

In May 1992, the Lijiang Dongba Culture Research Institute sent people to Kenpeigu to talk with He Shengwen about establishing a workshop. When they asked He the cost of setting up a workshop in his house, he said 300 yuan. On September 9, the Dongba Paper Workshop was officially opened. In the following years, He sent almost all the Dongba paper that he made, a total of 7,284 pieces, to the institute, at 1.5 yuan each first and later 1.8 yuan each.

After the big earthquake struck Lijiang in February 1996, He's workshop closed. The lack of funds was the main reason. His father-in-law's prediction unfortunately came true. Making paper had not increased his family income; on the contrary, it took up time that could otherwise have been used for farming.

When I, together with reporters from the *China Three Gorges Project Daily* and others from Hubei, visited He Shengwen in his village, he told us that he felt great pressure at home. When He was busy making paper, his wife and his 70-year-old mother had to do all the household work, which meant to farm their three hectares of fertile and mountainous land and raise their seven cattle, eight sheep, 20 pigs and 10 chickens. He regretted having put the women he loved in such difficult situations. He's son, 20-year-old He Zhiguo, showed no interest in making Dongba paper and preferred working as a mountain rancher to earn a fixed income.

Still, he did not give up. Based on traditional Dongba paper designs, He Shengwen created the "flower bud paper". He plans to produce more new varieties and develop them into tourist souvenirs, which he believes can lead his village to prosperity. He now has about 1,000 yuan that he saved from the government relief fund for the earthquake. It seems that it will be a long time before he realises his dream.

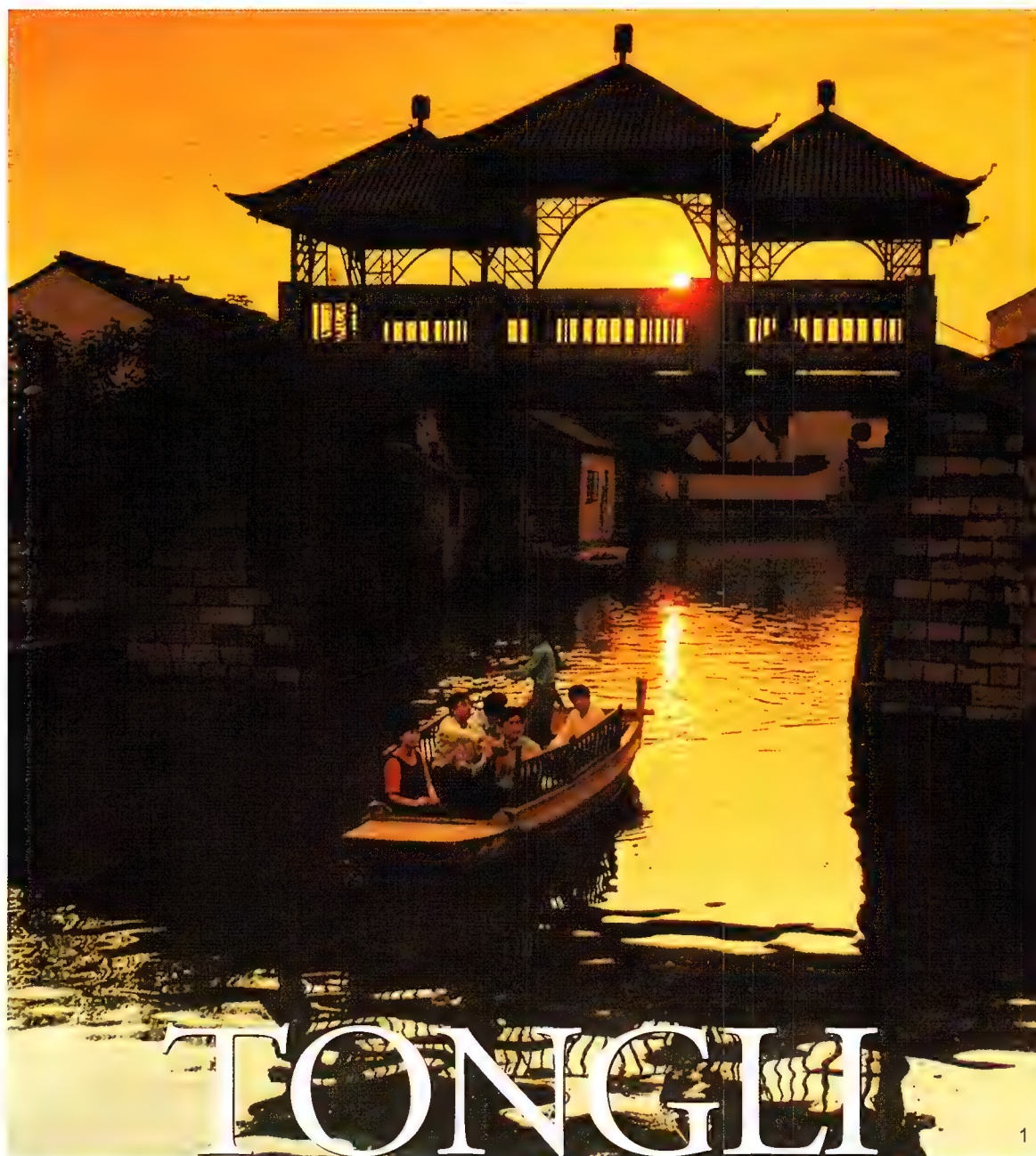


Translated by Wang Xiuhong



1. He Shengwen added flowers into the materials and invented the "flower bud paper" on the basis of traditional Dongba paper handicraft.
2. The Dongba paper was mainly used for writing the Dongba scriptures in characters that are referred to as living fossils in the history of world culture.
3. The production instruments are hand-made with local materials. The wooden trough used for cleansing paper pulp is hollowed out of one solid log.





## A TOWN OF BRIDGES, STREAMS AND HOMES

*Photos & article by Liu Fengqun*



**T**ONGLI IS A SHINING PEARL IN A REGION OF RIVERS AND LAKES IN EAST CHINA'S JIANGSU PROVINCE, JUST SOUTH OF THE YANGTSE RIVER. THOUGH STILL UNFAMILIAR TO MANY PEOPLE, IT IS FAST BECOMING A NEW TOURIST SPOT.

THE TOWN LIES BESIDE TAIHU LAKE AND THE GRAND CANAL AND IS SURROUNDED BY FIVE LAKES. BUILT IN THE SONG DYNASTY OVER 1,000 YEARS AGO, IT IS AN OLD WATER TOWN WORTHY OF THE NAME.





### TOWN PROTECTED FOR TOURISM

In 1982, Tongli was the first, and the only old town in Jiangsu to be listed as a historical and cultural site under provincial protection. In 1995 it was also chosen as one of the province's first group of famous historical and cultural towns. The town is presently applying for inclusion on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

The town is making great plans to protect the old town and develop tourism. While preserving the numerous historical sites, it has also developed many new projects, including a holiday village, to cater for the tourists. Still, many more ancient buildings and scenic spots await introduction.

### LEGEND BEHIND THE TOWN'S NAME

In the old days, the name of Tongli was Fu Tu (Rich Land), which reflected the fact but was somewhat showy. The present name is a variation of the old one. The Chinese character "fu" was broken into two, the upper part became Tong, and the lower part was combined with the character "tu" to become Li.

There is a legend about the change of its name. It says that the village of Tongli was first inhabited by a group of people from Zhejiang who fled their home village in a famine. With plentiful water and fertile land, their new home eventually became a place of prosperity, named Rich Land. During the reign of Emperor Yangdi of the Sui Dynasty (581-618), however, the state power was declining and the imperial

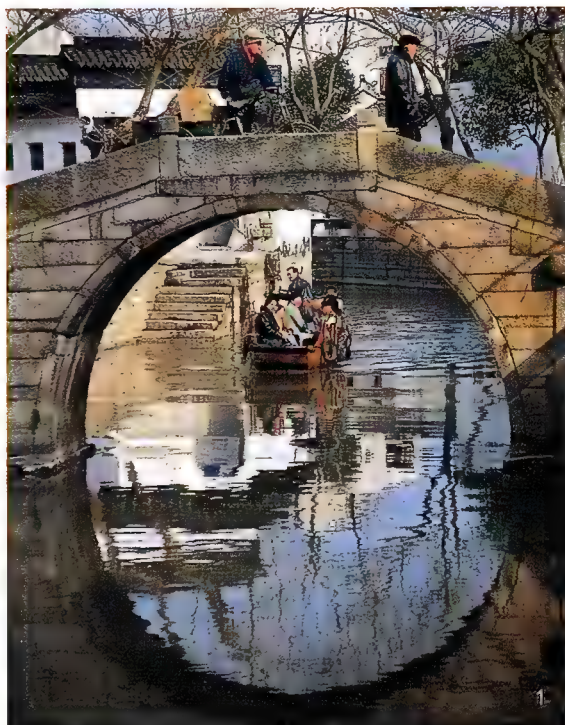
court could not collect enough revenue because of the frequent disasters taking place here and there in the country. One year, when the emperor heard about the Rich Land, he sent officials to double tax the peasants. The folks did not know what to do and they all gathered to solicit opinions from a learned person in the village. The scholar gave them instructions and they waited for the court official calmly.

When the tax collector arrived, the scholar, on behalf of the folks, welcomed him, but explained that the villagers could not afford paying any more grain for tax. The official was angry. He could not believe that a place named Rich Land could be poor. The scholar then offered him a village tour. Throughout the village, they could not find a sign marked as Futu, or Rich Land. The official was puzzled; the scholar, pointing at the



1. Tongli greets visitors with an elegant scene of bridges and waters.
- 2-4. The residents of Tongli live a simple and happy life.
5. A panoramic view of the ancient town of Tongli





changed name boards which now all claimed the village to be Tong Li, explained that the village's name was not Rich Land at all, but was misread as Fu Tu. The court official had no choice but to leave empty handed.

### MANY BRIDGES

Tongli is described as a place with "small bridges, flowing streams and waterside homes". Indeed, it features "three manys" — many bridges, many Ming- and Qing-style buildings and many famous persons.

Roaming through Tongli, it often happens that before you realise it, you have actually crossed several bridges. Situated in a land of waters, the town of Tongli is divided into 15

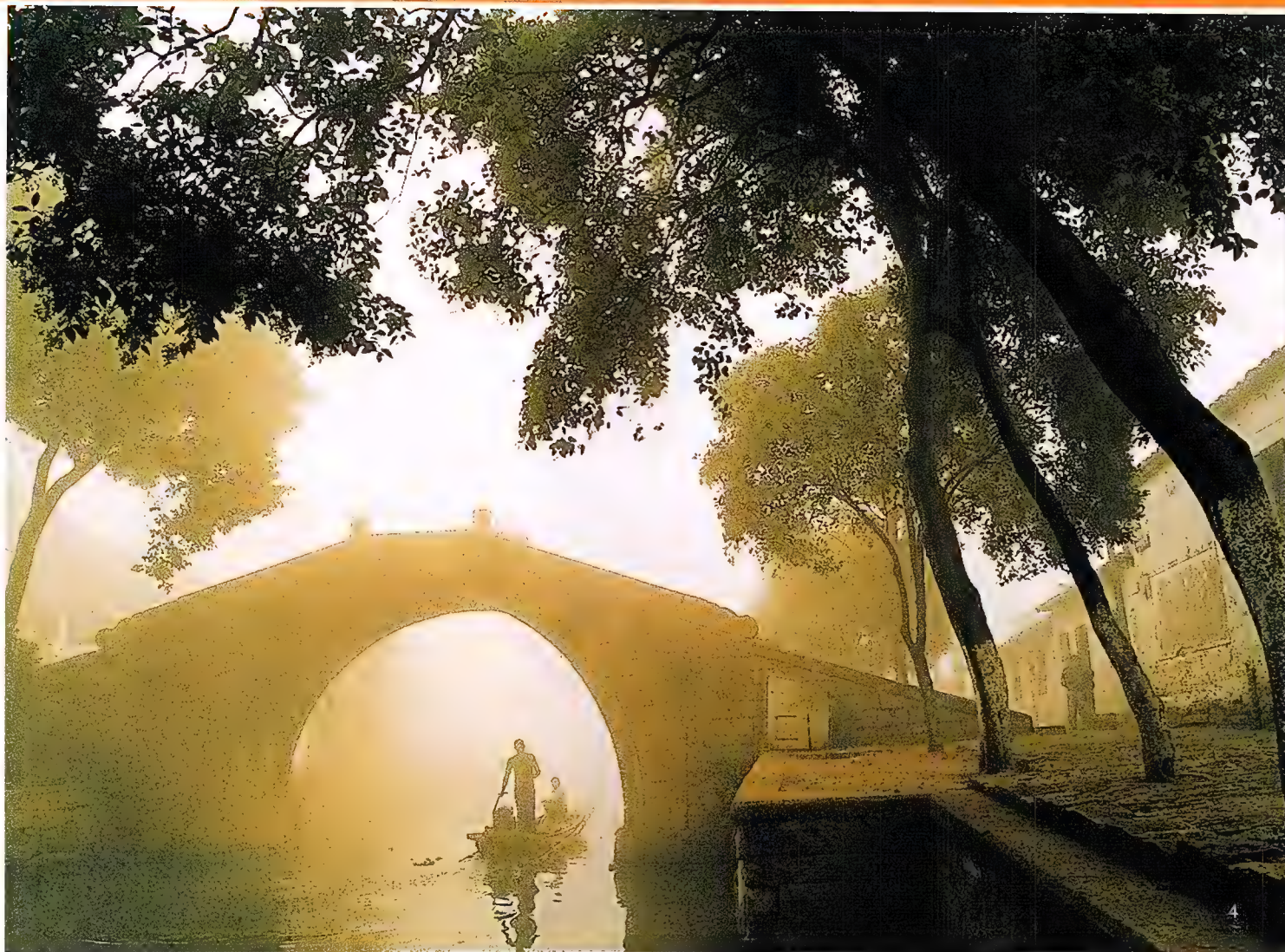
islands, which are connected by 49 ancient bridges built during different periods. Naturally, many of the bridges have become the landmarks of the town. Three of these bridges are the most popular — Taiping (Peace), Jili (Fortune) and Changqing (Celebration). Taiping Bridge and Jili Bridge were both rebuilt in 1747, during the reign of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty. The former is a beam-type bridge, small and exquisite; the latter is an arch bridge. Changqing Bridge, popularly called Xiejia or Guangli Bridge, was rebuilt in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). These three bridges are located close to one another to form a triangle. Local people believe that passing over these three bridges can dispel disaster and bring in good fortune and happiness. So, it has become the custom in Tongli that whenever there is a celebration, be it a wedding or a birthday party, the host family would invite all their guests to walk over the three bridges.

The oldest bridge in Tongli is Siben Bridge, which lies in Liaobin Village in the suburbs of the town. This 700-year-old bridge was built by Ye Yin of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). Ye was not an official but he loved his country and people very much. He named the bridge Siben, which means thinking of the source, to remind the court officials that they should not forget their country and people, and should raise their spirits to recover lost territory. The shortest bridge in Tongli is the One-Step Bridge, which lies on the lotus pool at Huancui Villa. This simple flat bridge is only 1.6 metres long and one metre wide, yet is an essential part of the town's scenery.

Fuguan Bridge is linked with a myth — A Fish Becomes a Dragon in the Peach Blossom Waves. A carp wanted to enter the fairyland by jumping across the dragon gate during the peach blossom season when water rose high in the river. However, during its attempt, it was so attracted by a beauty crossing the bridge that it did not jump high enough. As the result, its head became a dragon head while its body remained







unchanged. Today, you can still see the stone relief carving of a dragon-head fish at the bottom of the arch.

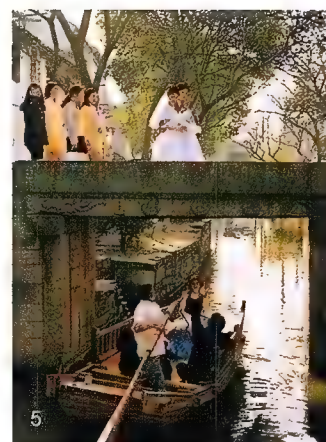
Throughout Tongli's long history, there have been many *jinshi* and *juren* — titles given to people who were successful in the imperial examinations. The Pu'an Bridge has been the witness of these scholarly achievements. On its stone wall on the west side a couplet is carved: "In moonlight, people are studying hard, The sound of reading from both banks brings them to officialdom." Also called Xiao Dongxi Bridge, it was built in 1506 during the reign of Emperor Zhengde of the Ming Dynasty.

#### BUILDINGS OF THE MING AND QING

The lakes and rivers surrounding Tongli provide convenient transportation and also make the town a resort of peace and tranquillity. It was where government officials and scholars chose to live long ago. From 1271 to 1911, 38 mansions, 47 temples and several hundred houses were built. Among the dozen existing Ming-dynasty structures are the Sanxie Hall, Ceng'en Hall, Shiyu Mansion and Wuhe Arch Gateway. The Qing buildings of note include Tuisi Garden, Gengle Hall, Chongben Hall, Wuben Hall, Jiayin Hall, Shide Hall and a few dozen others. The Chongben and Jiayin halls, the

best preserved and most complete, are now open to the public. Many others are under renovation and will open as tourist spots one after another in the near future.

Chongben Hall lies north of the Changqing Bridge on Fuguan Street, and faces the water to the south. It also stands opposite to the Jiayin Hall. The two halls and the three bridges together form one of the best scenes in Tongli. The owner of Chongben Hall was Qian Youqin, who bought part of the old West House from the Gu family in 1912 and rebuilt it. The mansion has five layers divided into the gate and main halls, front and rear towers, and a kitchen.



1. A cruise along the canals is a must for tourists in Tongli.
2. The Three Bridges — Taiping, Jili and Changqing — are hot scenic spots of Tongli.
3. Chongben Hall standing by the waterside
4. The charming Pu'an Bridge
5. The newlyweds crossing a bridge





The exquisite carvings represent the most distinguished character of this hall. When you walk into the courtyard, you see a relief carving, *Carp Jumping over Dragon Gate*, which implies official promotion and prosperity, and a brick carving, *Wishing the Son Succeeds*. On the first gateway is the inscription, "Advocate Virtue and Think of the Source". On the long windows stretching along the three sections between the main hall to the inner hall, there are 100 wood carvings vividly depicting the stories from the *West Chamber* and *A Dream of Red Mansions*. The wood carvings on the rear hall, 58 in total and all about stories popular in South China, are the best.

The Jiayin Hall was owned by Liu Bingnan, who had made a fortune through his oil mill in Luxu and built this mansion in Tongli in 1922. He spent more than 20,000 taels of silver to construct this house with four sections and 32 rooms.

The fine and smooth outer wall of Jiayin Hall gives a feeling of solidity. The main building of this hall, popularly called Shamao Hall, is a Ming-style structure, tall and spacious. The main hall is decorated with many woodcarvings, including eight depicting lifelike opera scenes based on the novel *Three Kingdoms*, such as the *Meeting in the Old City* and *Three Heroes Fight with Lü Bu*. These pictures have been collected into the *Suzhou Volume of*

*Chinese Operas*. A garden has been added to the mansion, with flowers, trees, hills, stones and corridors, enhancing the mansion's picturesque scene.

In Yanqing Tower, the inner house, there are also many stone and wood carvings which are highly valued art treasures. Among these wonderful works are *Five Lucky Persons Hold a Peach*, *Secret Eight Immortals*, *A Man of Wisdom Evaluates a Horse* and *Step on the Snow Looking for Plum Blossom*. A horizontal board, with the characters "Honesty Is the Family Motto", in the hall reflects the owner's wish for his descendants.

The Shide Hall is located in the middle of Ming-Qing Street. This imposing mansion with great cultural value was the old residence of the Cao family — a literary family spanning many generations. It was built in the early 1800s during the reign of Emperor Daoguang of the Qing Dynasty.

The former residence of Chen Qubing, a reformer and poet of the early 20th century, was built in 1920. Located in Sanyuan Street in the old town, it has 42 rooms, including the Haoge Hall, Baichi Tower, Luyu Qingyao Hall, a study and a family temple. In 1995, it was cited as a historical and cultural site under the protection of Jiangsu Province.

The South Garden Teahouse was built on the water to overlook both sides of the river. It is being repaired now and will soon open to public. Sitting in the teahouse, you can enjoy the boats sailing up and down the river.

### THE GARDEN TO RETREAT AND RETHINK

The former owner of this garden would not have expected his private garden to become the limelight of Tongli many years later. Tuisi (Retreat and Rethink) Garden was built between 1885 and 1887 during the reign of Emperor Guangxu of the Qing Dynasty by an Anhui military commander named







Ren Lansheng. He was dismissed from his post and returned to Tongli to build his private garden at a cost of 100,000 taels of silver. He named the garden Tuisi, meaning it to be a place to retreat and think of his misdoing.

In this small garden of about 0.6 hectare, there are pavilions, platforms, halls, towers, corridors, bridges and chambers. It is a rare example that has combined a residence perfectly with garden scenes.

Tuisi Garden has a horizontal layout, different from the traditional garden which is built with depth. This was probably because Ren wanted to conceal his wealth. The garden has residential, courtyard and garden sections. The outer part of the residence consists of the gate, tearoom and main hall. Wanxiang Tower, which houses the family's bedrooms, stands in the inner part. There is a double-deck corridor connecting the halls, and by using the staircases at the east and west ends people could conveniently avoid exposure to the sun and rain.

The courtyard offers a wide-open area, where old trees provide shade. The Land Boat in the courtyard was where the host met his guests. On both sides of the courtyard are buildings named Tower of Spring Moon Enjoyment, Beautiful Scene Pavilion, Welcoming Guests House and House of Yearly Coldness, where the family entertained friends and admired the scenery.

A tall wall with a "moon gate" separates the garden in the east section and the courtyard. Entering the gate, you see pavilions, platforms, halls, towers, corridors, houses, bridges and chambers built around a pond. This is why Tuisi Garden is

also known as "Garden on the Water". From the Waterside Pavilion in the garden, you can particularly enjoy the rookeries and fish in the pond.

A winding corridor leads you into the depths of the garden. Looking through the small windows in the wall, you will see several big characters, which literally mean "Enjoying the Clear Wind and Bright Moon Without a Penny". This indicates how the owner felt about his garden. From here you can cross the small Triple-Bend Bridge over rippling waves. The garden's Heavenly Bridge is something rarely seen in a classic garden. It crosses over the man-made hill and connects the Rain House, an ideal site to enjoy the coolness of summer, and the Hardship Platform, a place for reading. Inside the Rain House there is a mirror giving the feeling of another garden in the garden, showing the designer's ingenuity.

On the northern side is a music room displaying the good taste of the host. The Guihua (Sweet-Scented Osmanthus) Hall is a lovely place for visitors to sip tea and enjoy the moon and flowers at night. The final magic of the garden occurs as you look around from the Tuisi Thatched Hall, feeling like you are viewing poetry or a painting.



1. The Ming-Qing Street
2. Inside the beautiful Tuisi Garden
3. The magnificent mansion of Jiayin Hall was built in 1922.
4. Elegant bridges are seen everywhere in Tongli.





### LUOXING ISLET

Luoxing Islet lies on the Tongli Lake east of Tongli. A ferry boat takes you there from the town in only a few minutes. It's a great way to enjoy the beauty of Tongli Lake with its mist and fishing boats, and the Luoxing Islet Temple, which is famous for its mist and rain scenes.

The structures on Luoxing Islet were first built during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), destroyed several times and finally rebuilt in the Qing Dynasty during the reign of Emperor Guangxu. Many of the old folks in Tongli still remember the magnificent buildings of that time. During the War of

Resistance Against Japan, Japanese invaders burned down all the buildings on the islet, and since then it had become a deserted island.

In 1996, the Tongli Town government started the reconstruction on the islet. Now visitors can tour around a series of scenic spots, such as the Town God Hall, Wenchang Tower, Doumu Pavilion, Land Boat, Winding Bridge, Lotus Pond and Fish Pond. As the sun sets, you can have a view of Tongli in twilight. In ancient times, scholars all came to Luoxing Islet to listen to the pleasant sounds created by the rain falling on the lake, leaves, tiles and stones. A storm brings sounds of rain and waves that form a majestic symphony.

In summer or autumn when the lotus blooms, the people of Tongli come to Luoxing Islet to appreciate the flowers. The annual Taoist ceremony held from the first to the tenth day of the first lunar month also attracts many pious devotees, who come to pray for good luck and happiness. Such gatherings are reminiscent of the grand scenes of ancient times.

*Translated by M. Q.*



1. The picturesque Luoxing Islet
2. Various temple halls and pavilions have been built on the Luoxing Islet.
3. Tongli Lake Resort, a three-star hotel



## TIPS FOR THE TRAVELLER

### • Transport

Fly first to Shanghai. Buses go from both Shanghai Stadium and Lutai Road to Tongli, taking about two hours at a cost of 75 yuan for a round trip. Fare includes the entrance ticket to Tongli. Buses also depart from Hongqiao Airport, taking one hour and 40 minutes at a cost of 50 yuan.

To visit Suzhou on the way, you can take the train along the Shanghai-Nanjing Railway or a bus. From Suzhou there are buses starting off from the Wuxian Bus Station every 15 minutes that go the 18 km to Tongli in about 35 minutes, at a cost of 6 yuan. Buses also leave the South Bus Station twice a day, taking the same time and costing 7 yuan.

Alternatively there are regular passenger ships that go between Wujiang and Zhouzhuang, another water town, passing by Tongli. Luxury boats travel from Zhouzhuang, less than 20 km away, to Tongli. A one-way trip costs 450 yuan per boat (60 persons per boat) and 600 yuan for a round trip.

### • Accommodation

Hotel	Address	Tel.
<b>Tongli</b>		
Tongli Lake Resort***	Tongli	(512) 333 0888
Sanyuan Great Hotel**	Tongli	(512) 333 1021
Tongli Folk Life Hotel	Tongli	(512) 333 1154
Tongli Hostel	Tongli	

### Wujiang (Six km from Tongli)

Wujiang Hotel***	Luxiang Road South	(512) 342 0888
Songling Hotel***	1 Lihong Road	(512) 342 0101
Wudu Hotel***	16 Zhongshan Road North	(512) 342 7999
Bright Moon Tower Hotel**	Luxiang Road South	(512) 341 1528

A standard room of a three-star hotel costs 250 yuan up, two-star hotel, 150 yuan up and a hostel charges 50 yuan per room or 15 yuan per person.

### • Tours

**Scenic Spots:** At the entrance to Tongli, you can buy a one-day ticket costing 35 yuan for entry to all the scenic spots in the town.

**Night Tour:** At the weekends, an evening walk through the Night Flower Garden in Tuisi Garden is quite special.

**Water Tour:** There are 30-minute tours on the canals roaming through the town for only 60 yuan. A boat tour, including a scenic tour of the three bridges in the old town, costs 60 yuan per boat (6 persons). A scenic tour on Tongli Lake costs 200 yuan per boat (40 persons). Water skiing on Tongli Lake is also available at a cost of 80 yuan per boat (6 persons).

### • Delicacies

Tongli is well-known as a land of fish and rice. Its major local-style specialities include shrimp cake, fish rolls and fried eel with sesame. There are also plenty of aquatic plants to test your taste buds.

Numerous kinds of local snacks are on sale all over Tongli. Min Cake is a kind of glutinous rice dumpling that is dark green and shiny. Its special flavour is a delight to everyone who tastes it. There are also the Zhuangyuantu, sweet nutcake, Qianshi Cake, pickled vegetables, Sole Cake, and the New Year Cake. The Sole Cake, shaped like a shoe sole, is crisp and delicious when it has just come out of the oven. Tongli has several 100-year-old establishments, such as the Yilong Sauce and Pickle Shop and Guxiangcun, which sell the special local delicacies.

### • Shopping

Ming-Qing Street is the place to go if you want to go "back in time" to shop. The buildings on both sides of the street were built in the Ming and Qing dynasties and still retain their original style. The shops here all sell local products, calligraphy, paintings, antiques, embroidery, delicious foods and snacks, which are relatively good quality for the price.



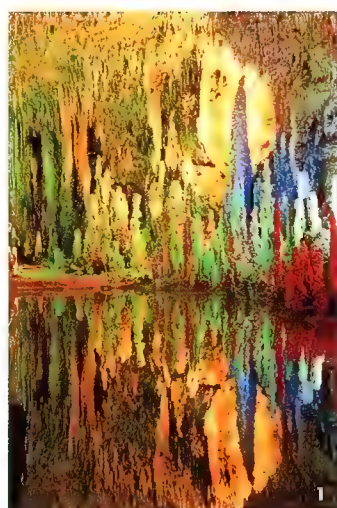


# Touring a World of Rock and Caves

Photos & article  
by Shan Xiaogang

Xingwen County in the southern part of Sichuan Province is known as a “world of rock and caves”. Stone forests and karst caves dot its 17 townships. Xingwen County is just south of Changning and Jiang'an counties, home of Sichuan's famous Bamboo Sea.

The Shilin (Stone Forest) Scenic Area covers more than 120 square kilometres. In the major scenic part in the mountains north of Shilin Town there are over 80 large karst caves, of which only two — Tianquan (Heavenly Spring) and Tianshi (Heavenly Lion) — are open to tourists now. The Tianquan Cave is the most representative one.



## The Seven Fairy Peaks

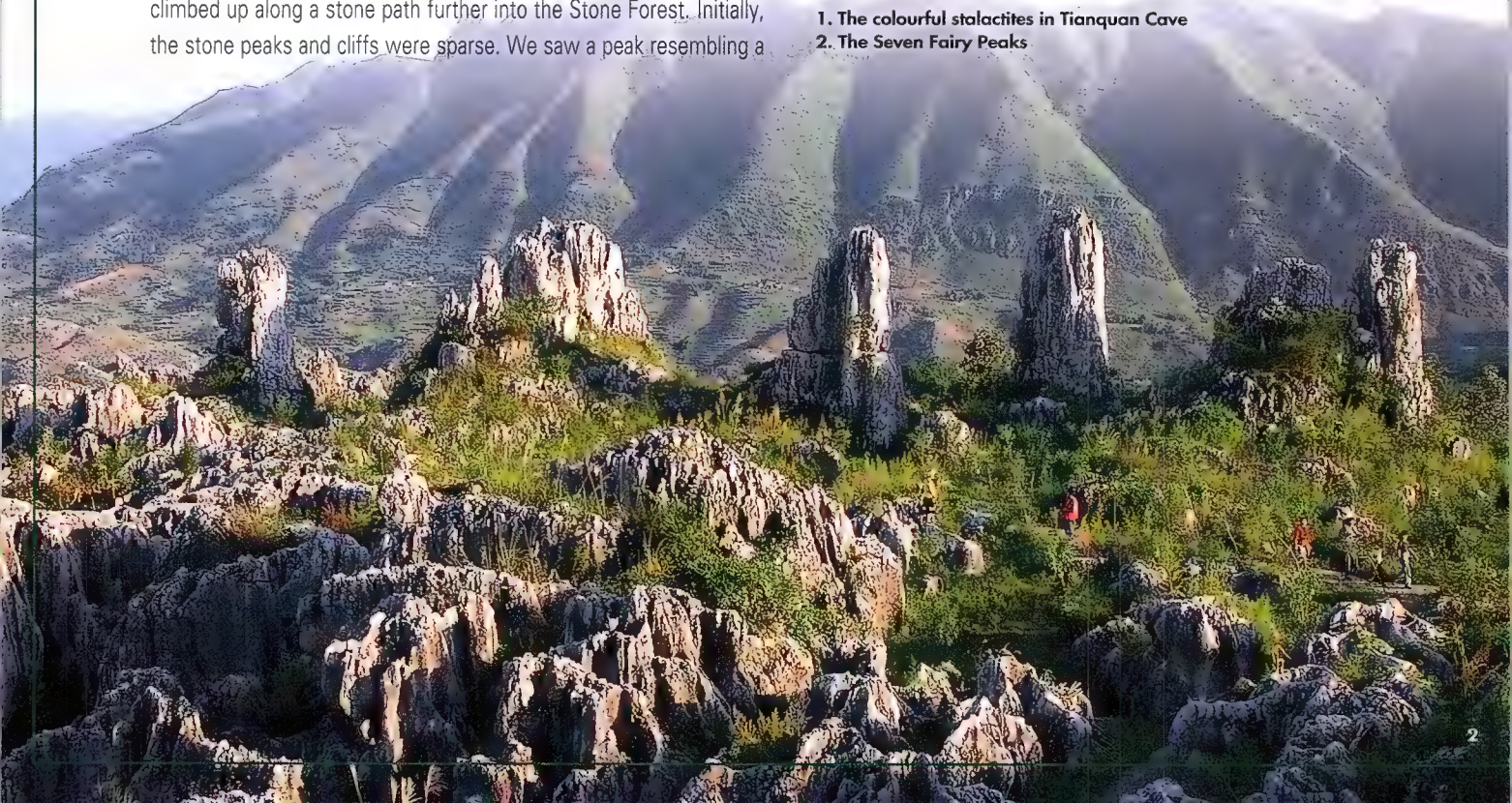
From Xingwen we headed up the mountain into the Shilin (Stone Forest) Scenic Area, and came to a gigantic pit surrounded by stone cliffs. It looks very much like a huge natural funnel. It is said that the pit has never flooded regardless how heavy the rainfall. In ancient times, this land had been under the boundless sea. Weathering over endless years had created the varied features of a karst relief — the lofty peaks, the sunken funnel, the stone forest and the deep caves.

On one side of the pit is a huge rock called Guest-Greeting Rock and on the opposite side are two boulders called Tangseng Baifo (Tang Monk Worshipping the Buddha) and Shanying (Mountain Eagle). We climbed up along a stone path further into the Stone Forest. Initially, the stone peaks and cliffs were sparse. We saw a peak resembling a

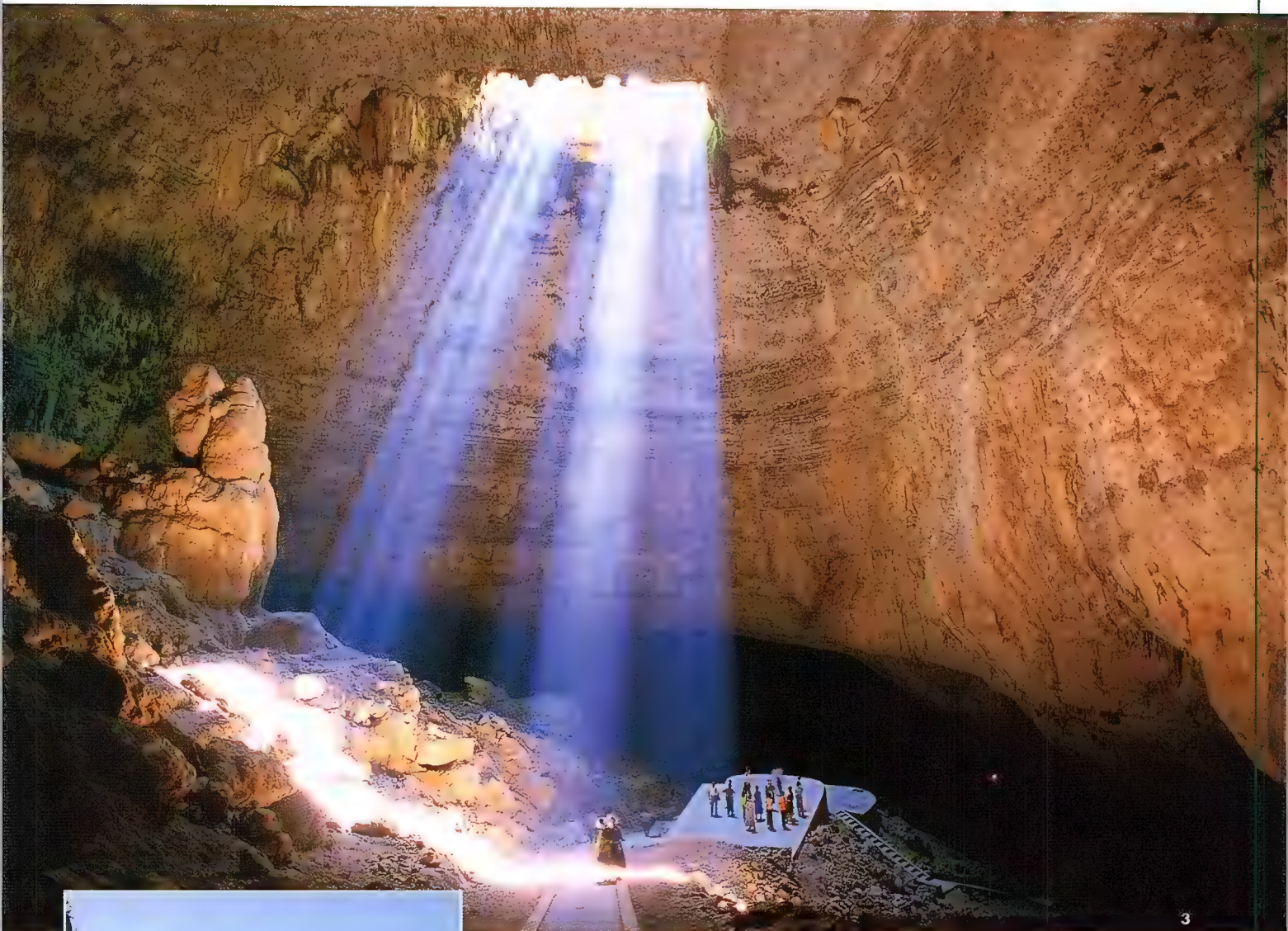
slanting pagoda by which a smaller rock looks like a young wife waiting for her husband. Further ahead, a rock in front of the white cliff resembles a human figure. Amidst the stone forest stand the local people's cottages, their courtyards surrounded by verdant bamboo groves. In the same area, two huge boulders cast their shadows over the southern slope, one resembling a huge mushroom and the other the head of a lion.

Gradually, the grey stone pillars and oddly-shaped rocks become denser, with winding trails making their way among the peaks. We walked through a “stone gate” to enter a “gallery of landscape paintings”. Numerous imposing pinnacles stand like giant stalagmites. Behind them are seven towering mountain peaks resembling tall and slender girls. The floating clouds seem to be their lightly swinging sleeves. To the right of these peaks is a herd of white sheep, with a girl standing among them. Taking a closer look, you will find these are actually tall and short stone columns that had been weathered into such shapes. The grey stones surrounding them look like waves in a dark sea.

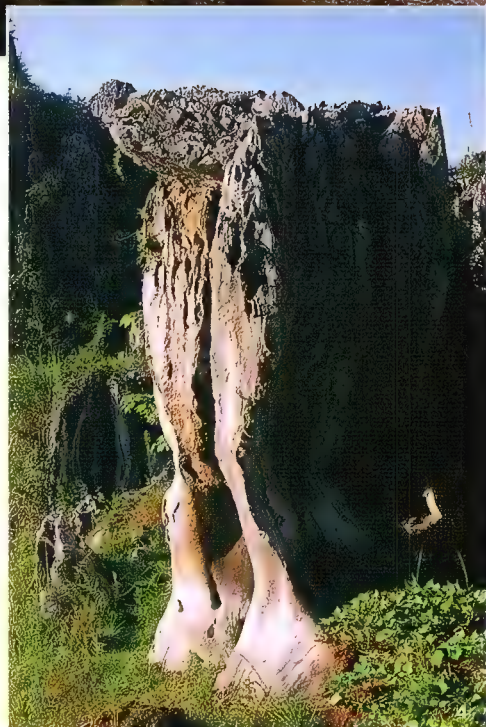
1. The colourful stalactites in Tianquan Cave
2. The Seven Fairy Peaks







3



## An Enormous Karst Cave

Walking along a natural plankway by the sheer cliffs, we reached Tianquan Cave, the most famous of all the caves in Xingwen County. Above the entrance of the cave is a fault scarp over 100 metres high. The northwestern end of the scarp looks like a lying tiger, and Tianquan Cave is hidden precisely under the tiger's belly.

A huge tunnel corridor led us deep inside as if we were going to the core of the earth. This enormous cave is large enough to hold several hundred people without appearing crowded. Apart from stone columns and stalagmites, both sides of the corridor are littered with huge boulders — each weighing a few hundred tons — which had apparently fallen from the top of the cave. The bright sunlight shot directly through the natural skylights, producing warm rings of light and adding an imposing quality to the rocks.

Inside the Tianquan Cave is another type of stone forest formed by stalagmites and stalactites. They take on various shapes, some resembling frogs, birds, penguins, peacocks and bears, and even elderly immortals and fairies. A gurgling stream flows by a curtain resembling a snow-white waterfall. Reflections in the pool are colourful and charming.

3. Sun rays falling into the Tianquan Cave

4. Stone buds in the Stone Forest

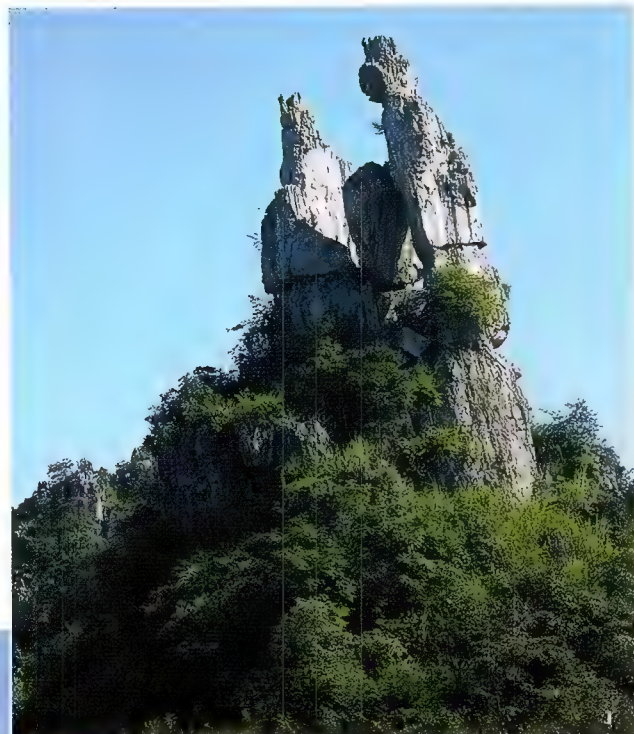


## Ancient Plankway on Red Cliffs

On the southwest edge of the Bamboo Sea there is a long and narrow, deep gully called Yinxiu. The gully runs sharply down to Dabao Village, where people in ancient times went to escape the turmoil of war. To guard the village, 13 ancient gates were set along the 2,000 metres of plankway built along the sheer cliffs.

The cliff is red rock, which is unique to this area by the Bamboo Sea. It becomes a bright red after rains. Over the last few years, new carvings entitled *36 Stratagems* have been made on the cliffs. Bamboo grows abundantly all over the red cliffs.

The winding deep gully and the red cliffs extend further west. Near the end of this gully is the Xianyu Cave, which is believed to be where the Taoist Tai cultivated himself and became an immortal. Some pavilions and halls stand on the terrace halfway up the steep cliffs by the entrance of the cave.



## Flying Waterfall and Valley Lake

The Liaoshui River, which originates from the Huaxi Stream, joins other streams at Wanli Town by the east entrance to the Bamboo Sea in Jiang'an County. It flows quietly east to the Huilong Bridge, then suddenly rushes down into a gourd-shaped valley, forming several layers of waterfalls. We followed a staircase carved out of the red cliff down into the deep valley. Looking up, the water seemed to come directly down from the blue sky.

The most magnificent is the Qicai (Multi-coloured) Flying Waterfall guarded by a giant stone in the shape of a golden tortoise. It can be viewed from various spots — on the Luohun Terrace, or by the Haoran Cave entrance, or from the plankway — and each different angle gives it a different appearance. Standing on top of the cliff, you can see the mouth of the valley and hear the echoing roar of the waterfalls at the bottom. Sometimes, a rainbow rises from the valley bottom.

The Qinglong (Blue Dragon) Lake in the valley also forms a wondrous scene with the surrounding mountain cliffs. Restaurants on bamboo rafts float on the lake and visitors can have a meal while having a tour around the lake.

*Translated by Z. G. Li*

1. Rocks in vivid human images
2. A farmer's house in the Stone Forest



# Tips for the Traveller

## Transport

Xingwen can be reached from Yibin or Luzhou. There are bus services from Chongqing via Luzhou and from Chengdu via Yibin to Xingwen. Buses regularly run from Xingwen to the Stone Forest 30 km away.

## Accommodation

It is convenient to stay in the reception house run by the Stone Forest Preservation Bureau at Shilin Town. The rate is 40 yuan per day. Xingwen Hotel in the town of Xingwen has standard rooms at 120 yuan.

## Tourist Attractions

Since the Stone Forest Scenic Area is so large, most tourists concentrate on the area to the north of the Shilin Town. During the peak tourist season, Miao song and dance performances are offered in the scenic area. All the tourist guides in the scenic area are Miao girls. If time permits, visit an area 48 km to the west, where you can see the suspended coffins of the Bo people, an ancient ethnic minority of southwest China.

## Shopping

Root carvings, odd-shaped stones.

## Local Specialities

At the Tianquan Cave, the Cave Restaurant offers unique local Miao-style dishes.



3. Pavilions built on the red cliffs at Tianbao Village
4. Small rocks that look like a herd of sheep
5. Delicate local food (by Liu Tianfu)



Xichang, capital of the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, is located in the southern part of Sichuan Province. Xichang boasts both a rich and colourful ethnic culture and a wonderful landscape in a mild warm climate. Coincidentally, the most advanced and the most primitive converge here — a satellite launch base as well as Yi tribes still following a traditional lifestyle.

# Introducing Xichang

Photos & article by Suolang Zhaxi

**Satellite Launch Base:** Command Centre, Launch Pads, Science and Technology Park

The Xiangchang Satellite Launch Base is in the mountains, about an hour's drive from Xichang. It used to be a place of high security. Now it has become a unique attraction with two parts open to tourists — the command centre and the satellite

launch site. Normally there are few people at the command centre, but tourists can enter the big hall on the second floor to view the console through a glass screen. Photography is not permitted here.

There are two launch pads at the launch site. One was used to send China's first man-made satellite into orbit. The other is more advanced, with a movable assembly tower, rather than a fixed one. A huge multi-stage rocket rests in the big hall near the launch site. This was the spare rocket for the first launch.



The Science and Technology Park near the launch site was built recently. The park's most outstanding structure is a vaulted building — the Museum of Science and Technology. In the museum, there is a simulated command centre that will relieve the disappointment of seeing the empty, real one.

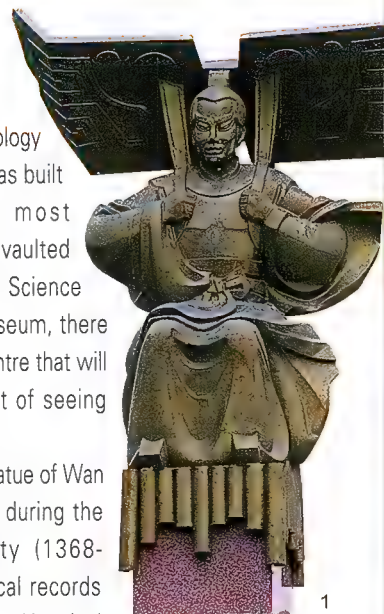
In the park, there is a statue of Wan Hu, who lived during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Historical records say that Wan Hu tied

some rockets to his body and ignited them. The powerful thrust of the rockets sent him up dozens of metres in the air. Although he died in the attempt, he was actually China's first "man in space".

The outer shell of a satellite is displayed in the park like a sculpture. The shell comes from a launch accident a few years ago. Only nine seconds after the satellite lifted off, it deviated from its planned course and dropped to the ground several hundred metres away. A guard closest to the site was pushed into a ditch and covered with dust from the explosion. Unhurt, he immediately got up and directed the confused traffic. He was given a commendation for his actions.

**Qionghai:** Taiyangdao Fishing Village, Qionghai Park, Lushan Hill

Qionghai Lake, the pride of Xichang, resembles a bright pearl inlaid in the mountains. In fact, pearls were once harvested here. The lake covers 31 square kilometres in this sunny highland city and is the largest lake on the Anning River, a tributary of the Jinsha River, the upper reaches of the Yangtse







River. At its deepest part, the water is 34 metres deep.

A huge compound of classical Chinese garden buildings have been built in the Qionghai Park along the one-km-long shoreline. Pleasure boat tours and the children's paradise are quite appealing. Thanks to the mild climate and clean water, it is also popular with swimmers.

Opposite the park is a 66-hectare strip of land stretching into the lake, called Taiyangdao (Sun Island), on which is a neatly planned fishing village. You can take a boat to the fishing village, where, besides going fishing, you can also ride a horse. For a wonderful treat, try the grilled fish there. It is seasoned and roasted over a fire, creating a crispy and delicious dish. The shrimps produced in Qionghai are famous too. For one special dish, called "drunken shrimps", the shrimps are soaked in liquor and eaten raw.

Lushan Hill is another scenic area not far from the Qionghai Lake. The hill, 2,317 metres above sea level, is covered with luxuriant cypresses. One of them was planted in the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220). Since the Tang Dynasty (618-907), 15 monasteries and temples had operated on the mountain, including the Guangfu Temple, Mengduan Temple and Sanjiao (Three-Religion) Nunnery. Most have been well preserved.



### Yi People: Liangshan-Style Restaurant, Baibaiding Village, Tuotuo Meat

The Yi ethnic group makes up the majority of the population in Liangshan. This minority has its own spoken and written language and boasts many unique cultural traditions. Some hotels and restaurants offer Yi song and dance performances. The Liangshanfeng (Liangshan-Style) Restaurant on Daxiangkou Street offers such performances in addition to serving authentic Yi dishes.

To learn about the real life of the Yis, the nearest place to go is the Baibaiding Village at the foot of Mount Luoji. The local people here live a primitive life. They make an interesting soup. The peppers are first baked over a fire and crushed into powder.

The soup is ready when cool spring water is added along with powder scraped from a certain tree root with a strong fragrant scent. In this village, visitors can also taste the Yi-style tuotuo (lump) meat made from suckling pig.

Translated by Z. G. Li



1. Wan Hu, the first "man in space"
2. The first rocket launch pad
3. Satellite shell left from a launch accident
4. The spare Long-March Rocket
5. The Taiyangdao fishing village on Qionghai Lake
6. Roaming about on Qionghai Lake in a small boat
7. Song and dance performance at Liangshan-Style Restaurant

### Tips for the Traveller

**Transport:** From the North Station in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan, trains go to Xichang, leaving at 7 p.m. and arriving at 8 a.m. the next day. In Xichang, transport is very convenient. Taxis are cheap — only 3 yuan in the downtown area and about 10 yuan to Qionghai Park.

**Accommodation:** Liangshan Hotel: 61 Shengli Road, Xichang; Tel: 3223007; 120 yuan per day.

**Tours:** It's best to join a local tour to the satellite launch base. It is a half-day trip costing less than 100 yuan. To go to the Qionghai Lake, take a taxi; admission is 5 yuan. The boat tour on the lake costs 3 yuan per person, or 60 yuan per boat. Admission to Lushan Hill is 2 yuan. There is no public transport to Baibaiding Village; you have to hire a taxi. The trip takes about 40 minutes. There are also many typical Yi villages in Puge County, not far from Xichang.





# Fabulous Terraced Fields

## in Guangdong and Fujian

*Photos & article by Lin Jinghua*

Terraced fields are the results of humans transforming nature, but in the eyes of photographers, they are beautiful pictures of curves and changing colours. At the mention of terraced fields, Yuanyang in Yunnan and Longsheng in Guangxi usually come to mind. Few people know there are lots of terraced fields in the mountains at the border between Raoping in eastern Guangdong Province and Pinghe in Fujian Province. Although terraced fields here are not as

concentrated as those in Yuanyang and Longsheng and are only a few hundred metres above sea level, they too present magnificent landscapes.

If you start from the Tangxi Reservoir 28 km from Raoping and head north, you enter a mountainous region of several hundred square kilometres, where terraced fields lie layer after layer. They extend like huge nets covering the whole mountainous area, while the small ones are scattered here





Sometimes drizzle comes to envelop the fields like gauze, forming the hazy scene described in obscure poems. After a downpour, water vapour rises from the foot of the mountains, and the terraced fields become a fascinating wash painting.

In early summer the terraced fields, full of sturdily growing rice seedlings, are an emerald green world full of vitality. On cloudy days the fields look like a green carpet, and pictures taken at this time convey different feelings. Colourfully clad country girls walking along the edge of the fields create ideal pictures. When the rice has ripened and is ready for harvest, the area turns golden. The colours in the reflection of the sunlight become richer, and the terraced fields present another world.

In addition to terraced fields, the life of the local people, such as a child embracing a calf's neck and making a face or aged men lighting small-bowled, long-stemmed tobacco pipes with curls of smoke rising, is also a good theme for photos. At the New Year and other festivals every household decorates their homes, slaughters pigs and chickens, and sets off firecrackers with enough clamour to drown the clicking of the camera.... Such rustic life may make you reluctant to leave.



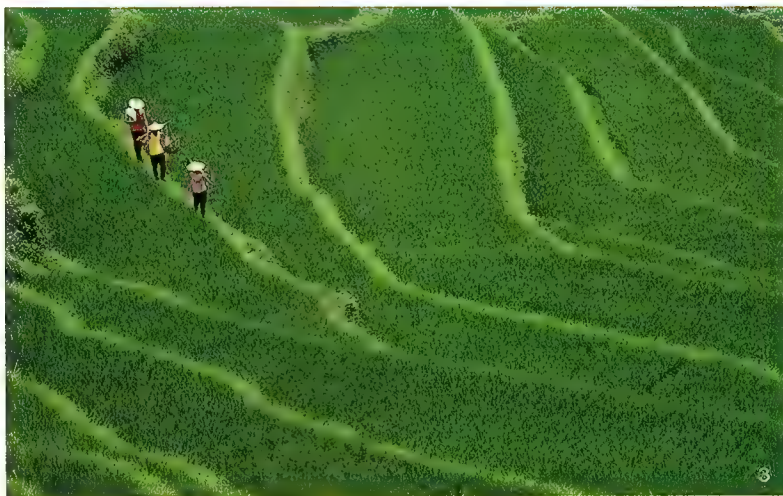
*Translated by Xiong Zhenru*

1. Morning scene of the mountains in Huanggang
2. A golden world at the autumn harvest in Shangshan
3. The emerald green fields in Daxi



and there, glittering like fish scales.

The best time to take pictures of the terraced fields is around the Qingming (Pure Brightness) early in the fourth lunar month. In this period, the fields are just ploughed and filled with water, awaiting rice transplants. They look neat and orderly. When the sun shines on the mirror-like surfaces of the water, the reflections of the bright light form a sharp contrast with the dark earth ridges between the fields. Pictures taken at this moment resemble woodcuts.





## Tips for the Traveller

### Transport

Express buses travel the highway between Guangzhou and Xiamen, and stop at Raoping.

### Accommodation

Lodging is best in Shao'an, Huanggang Township and Shantou. Small hotels such as the Supply and Marketing Co-operative Hotel in Xiazhai and the Xiaoxi Hotel in Pinghe have room rates ranging from 20 to 150 yuan.

### Suggested Itinerary

Travel northward on the road past Sanrao and Jiufeng towards Xiazhai. If you turn south at the cross road by the inspection station four km from Jiufeng you can take photos of the terraced fields and villages there, which look glorious at sunset. Go north at the cross road four km from Xiazhai and climb the mountain for some spectacular photos of the terraced fields in the late afternoon or early morning. At Luxi, 31 km north of Xiazhai you can get great photos of the terraced fields as well as the Hakkas houses on the western side of the road.

### Notes

Some of the best pictures are taken early in the morning. The mist is the most mysterious around dawn and terraced fields bathed in the rays of the morning sun are dazzlingly beautiful.

A telephoto lens is particularly useful for photos of the terraced fields. A tripod and camera cable are also needed.

1. The daylight reflections on cloudy days on Mount Jiufeng presents a scene of lasting appeal.
2. Good friends, Luxi
3. The cradles of a Tangxi rural household





# China Tourism 20th Anniversary

Hong Kong *China Tourism* will soon celebrate the 20th anniversary of its founding in July. Readers who will be in Hong Kong during this period are welcome to join us in the following series of celebratory activities.

DATE	ACTIVITY	PLACE	CONTENT
May 4	<b>Lecture: Touring Tibet</b> , by Xie Guanghui, reporter	City University, 83 Tat Chee Ave., Kowloon Tong	Slide show, travel experiences and tips
May 19	<b>Lecture: Touring Inner Mongolia</b> , by Huang Yanhong, reporter	Same as above	Slide show, travel experiences and tips
June 10 or 11	<b>Lecture: Travelling Along the Silk Road</b> , by Chan Yat Nin, vice editor-in-chief	Venue of the ITE, HK Conference & Exhibition Centre	Slide show, photography skills and travel tips
July	<b>Exhibition of Best Photos of HK China Tourism</b>	To be decided	A survey of excellent photos of the past 20 years
July 19-24	<b>Hong Kong Book Fair</b>	HK Conference & Exhibition Centre, New Wing, Hall 2, 2B6, 8	New books offered with discount
August 4-6	<b>Exhibition of Best Photos of HK China Tourism</b>	Festival Walk, Kowloon Tong	A survey of excellent photos of the past 20 years

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Light refreshments such as steamed vegetable buns, steamed twisted rolls, steamed chive buns and mung bean cakes go well with peanut soup.

# Xiamen's Huang Zehe Peanut Soup

Photos & article  
by Xiao Gang

Zhongshan Road is the busiest commercial street in Xiamen. On its southern side in the west stands a tall trade building, which has a first floor snack bar called Huang Zehe Peanut Soup Bar. A golden signboard in front announces Fujian's Famous Snacks. Due to its great location and its fairly-priced special delicacies, it is packed with customers every day.

I walked to the peanut soup counter and found milk-white soup bubbling in a pot with snow-white pieces of peanuts churning in it. The waitress ladling the soup, the busiest person in the bar, served the patient customers. Like a Bodhisattva who gives charity porridge to hungry people, she worked hard wielding the ladle, beads of sweat oozing out from her forehead. This restaurant's soup has become known far and wide in Xiamen, though it is made of ordinary ingredients.

What has made Huang Zehe Peanut Soup so famous? It is the particular cooking method. First the peanuts are soaked in boiling water to remove the skin and then boiled in an earthenware pot on a slow fire. When the peanuts are cooked, sugar is added and cooking continued until the peanuts split into two and float on the surface. Peanuts must be thoroughly cooked but not dissolved, so that the soup is thick but not sticky. It tastes very sweet. When the peanuts touch your tongue, they melt immediately in your mouth, aromatic but not greasy. The soup goes very well with lightly salted refreshments. The best part is that it takes just three to five yuan to eat your fill.

Deep-fried twisted dough sticks, fried dates, cakes stuffed with chives, steamed buns stuffed with vegetable, meat, or sweetened bean paste, fried glutinous rice cakes and mung bean cakes are some of the things that go well with the soup. The

chive-stuffed cake has a unique shape and taste. The wrapper is made of wheat flour with lard, and the stuffing consists of pork leg meat, shrimps, pieces of bream, water chestnuts, chives and mushrooms. The cakes, shaped like a small jewel case with wavy edges, are fried. The outside is crisp, while the inside filling is soft and delicious.

The sweet and crisp Horse's Hoof shortbread, or Shixiang cake, has a fascinating story behind it. In the late Ming Dynasty a man called Ma Kaishan ran a fried food shop in Tong'an in

Xiamen. He specialised in shortcakes stuffed with malt sugar. Since the shortcakes were in the shape of a horse's hoof, and the manager's surname was Ma (horse), the cakes were called Horse's Hoof. Light and never rancid,

they soon became the main food of travellers. At that time a Tong'an martial arts practitioner, Zhuang Weiyang, took the shortbread on his journey to the imperial contest in the capital, Beijing. On his way, at an inn, he offered some shortbread to a prince disguised in plain clothes. The prince lent Zhuang his horse for the contest and Zhuang became a military candidate. Later, he gave the prince a lot of shortbread. So, it became quite well-known in Beijing and people of every rank liked it. Even today, southern Fujian women eat it as a kind of tonic, and many people buy it as a gift.

*Translated by Xiong Zhenru*

Huang Zehe Peanut Soup Bar is at 22 Zhongshan Road.

**Business hours:** 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

**Price:** bowl of peanut soup: one yuan; Xiamen vegetable or meat steamed buns: one yuan; Horse's Hoof shortbread: one yuan; chive-stuffed cake: one yuan; noodles: from 3 yuan to 8 yuan a bowl; box of Huang Zehe Cakes: six yuan.



Inside Huang Zehe Peanut Soup Bar



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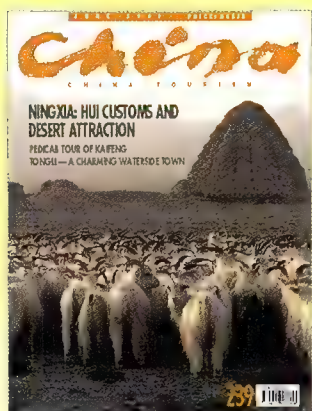
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# Readership Survey

*China Tourism* always appreciates feedback from the readers. According to your suggestions, we have recently added a variety of new columns to satisfy different demands. Still, we need to know more of your opinions, including criticisms and suggestions. Please take a couple of minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to us. Thank you!

**Please give your evaluation of the stories in this issue and your overall impression of *China Tourism*.**

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Ningxia: Land of Chinese Muslims	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pedicab Tour of Kaifeng	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tongli — a Charming Town	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Miao Bonfire Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stone Forest in West Sichuan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Photographs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traveller's Tips	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Opinions: _____					

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of trips to China in the last 5 years? \_\_\_\_\_

## Where (how) did you first see *China Tourism*?

☐ Subscription ☐ Newsstand or bookstore

☐ Hotel Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Others \_\_\_\_\_

## Main purpose for reading *China Tourism*?

☐ Planning trips ☐ General interest in China's customs, scenery, etc. ☐ Business

☐ Tourist Trade purposes ☐ Others \_\_\_\_\_

## What do you like most about *China Tourism*?

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you happy with the factual contents of *China Tourism*? ☐ Yes ☐ No

## What are your suggestions for improvement?

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. It provides us with invaluable feedback which will help us improve *China Tourism* magazine for you.

\*Please mail this questionnaire to our office at 24/F, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong, or fax to (852) 2561 8196.



- In the year 604, Emperor Yangdi of the Sui Dynasty ordered a grand canal to be built. The result is the 1,794-km-long Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal completed by millions of workers in six years. The construction is considered one of the key water conservancy projects in ancient China. Flowing with



the canal, we will bring you on a romantic journey to some of the picturesque towns in the Yangtse River Delta in our "Feature Story".

In **Yangzhou**, you can drown yourself in the irresistible beauty of the town and the Shouxi Lake which were highly praised by many scholars and loved by Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty. In **Zhenjiang**, you can taste the appetising globefish and pay a visit to the Jinshan Temple, a major scene of the legendary story, *The White Snake*, which has been adapted to various local operas. In **Changzhou**, we recommend shopping in the Comb Street for great souvenirs and trying the renowned Tianmu Lake fish casserole. Besides, you can cruise the ancient canal in **Wuxi**, admire the delicate clay figures of Huishan, have a stroll among the poetic **Suzhou** gardens and see how Suzhou embroidery is produced.

- We will also bring you into a golden world — the **Altay** region of Xinjiang in September. This northern part of Xinjiang boasts the most charming autumn scenery in China, which attracted a group of photography buffs to brave the harsh and long journey from Chengdu in Sichuan to Altay. They were rewarded with the best autumn scenes of Altay, including snow-capped peaks, golden birch forests and aquamarine rivers.
- At the border of Sichuan and Tibet, there is an isolated place called **Shanyan** which is considered a land of mystery. Though nearly inaccessible, Shanyan possesses a strong attraction to explorers because it is rumoured that the Shanyan people live in a strongly patriarchal society and make a living by stealing....



# Hotels in Ningxia

Name	Star	Address	Postcode	Tel	Fax
International Hotel	***	25 North Ring Rd, Yinchuan	750004	(951) 671 1808	(951) 671 1808
Rainbow Hotel	***	16 Jiefang St West, Yinchuan	750001	(951) 691 8888	(951) 691 8788
Ningxia Hotel	**	3 Park St, Yinchuan	750001	(951) 504 5131	(951) 504 4338
Sun God Hotel	**	7 Yinxin Rd North, Yinchuan	750001	(951) 504 6110	(951) 504 6609
Helanshan Hotel	**	1 Shuofang Rd, New District, Yinchuan	750021	(951) 207 7301	(951) 207 7075
Fengning Hotel	**	6 Jiefang St East, Yinchuan	750001	(951) 602 8898	(951) 602 7224
Electricity Hotel	**	22 Minzu St South, Yinchuan	750004	(951) 410 0568	(951) 410 9106
Kaida Hotel		2 Nanxun St East, Yinchuan	750004	(951) 602 1698	(951) 609 3837
Ningxia Trade Union Tower		1 Jiefang St East, Yinchuan	750001	(951) 601 6898	(951) 602 4931
Yinchuan Railway Hotel		West side of Railway Station, Yinchuan	750011	(951) 306 9112	(951) 306 9119
Zhongyin Hotel		53 Funing St, Yinchuan	750001	(951) 501 1918	(951) 504 7545
Haodu Hotel		9 Fenghuang St North, Yinchuan	750001	(951) 504 6918	(951) 504 4125
Shahu Hotel		22 Wenhua St West, Yinchuan	750001	(951) 501 2128	(951) 502 8049
Yiheng Hotel		Xingzhou Rd Central, Yinchuan	750011	(951) 306 0688	(951) 307 3090
Yihong Hotel		1 East Road, Yinchuan	750004	(951) 608 1118	(951) 601 2048
Meiyuan Hotel		Shengli St North, Yinchuan	750004	(951) 408 1688	(951) 407 1768
Baiji Hotel		21 Xinhua St East, Yinchuan	750001	(951) 608 1618	(951) 601 7066
Daxia Hotel		Western Xia Mausoleum Scenic Area, Yinchuan	750021	(951) 216 1668	(951) 216 1668
Baisheng Hotel		7 Gongnong Lance, Yinchuan	750001	(951) 602 6999	(951) 601 3140
Yuhuangge Hotel		2 Guanghua, Jiefang St East, Yinchuan	750004	(951) 602 6031	(951) 604 3173
Zhongwei Hotel	**	33 West St, Zhongwei	751700	(953) 701 2609	(953) 701 2350
Yixing Hotel		2 North St, Zhongwei	751700	(953) 701 7666	(953) 701 9993



# Flights to and from Yinchuan

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Beijing — Yinchuan	2 5 6 7	1040	1215	WH2130
	4	1050	1215	WH2130
	5	1535	1655	CA1217
	2 6	1550	1740	WH2158
	2	1645	1755	CA1217
Yinchuan — Beijing	2 4 5 6 7	0830	0955	WH2129
	2 6	1330	1510	WH2157
	5	1735	1910	CA1218
	2	1835	2010	CA1218
Chengdu — Yinchuan	1 3 6	1330	1735	ZZ 408
Yinchuan — Chengdu	1 3 6	0810	1220	ZZ 407
Chongqing — Yinchuan	4	1310	1640	ZZ 416
	7	1540	1900	ZZ 416
Yinchuan — Chongqing	4	0835	1200	ZZ 415
	7	1100	1500	ZZ 415
Dunhuang — Yinchuan	2 6	1115	1250	WH2157
Yinchuan — Dunhuang	2 6	1820	2010	WH2158
Guangzhou — Yinchuan	1 4 6	1730	2020	WH2366
Yinchuan — Guangzhou	2 5 7	1255	1525	WH2365
Nanjing — Yinchuan	2 5	1400	1815	ZZ 522
Yinchuan — Nanjing	2 5	0840	1255	ZZ 521
Qingdao — Yinchuan	2 4 7	0730	1420	SC 765
Yinchuan — Qingdao	2 4 7	1450	2100	SC 766
Shanghai — Yinchuan	2 6	1130	1430	WH2524
	3 7	1350	1715	FM 201
Yinchuan — Shanghai	2 6	1535	1805	WH2523
	3 7	1800	2140	FM 202

Taiyuan — Yinchuan	3 6	0800	0950	8C 723
Yinchuan — Taiyuan	3 6	1030	1220	8C 724
Xi'an — Yinchuan	2 5	0805	0920	ZZ 203
	7	0900	1010	ZZ 213
	2 7	1250	1400	ZZ 205
	2 4 7	1305	1420	SC 765
	1 3 5	1330	1450	ZZ 205
	4	1520	1640	ZZ 416
	1 3 6	1620	1735	ZZ 408
	3 7	1625	1715	FM 201
	7	1750	1900	ZZ 416
	3 5	1935	2030	WH2261
Yinchuan — Xi'an	1 3 6	0810	0935	ZZ 407
	4	0835	0945	ZZ 415
	2 5	1005	1130	ZZ 204
	7	1100	1220	ZZ 415
	4 6	1255	1345	WH2262
	2 7	1430	1540	ZZ 206
	2 4 7	1450	1615	SC 766
	1 3 5	1530	1640	ZZ 206
	3 7	1800	1900	FM 202
	1 4 6	1800	1910	ZZ 214
Zhengzhou — Yinchuan	2 4 7	1015	1420	SC 765
	2 5	1615	1815	ZZ 522
Yinchuan — Zhengzhou	2 5	0840	1040	ZZ 521
	2 4 7	1450	1815	SC 766

\* For reference only.

## Airline codes:

CA = Air China FM = Shanghai Airlines SC = Shandong Airlines WH = China Northwest Airlines ZZ = Chang'an Airlines 8C = Shanxi Airlines

# Trains to and from Yinchuan

Train No.	Route	Dep.	Arr.
177	Beijing West Station — Yinchuan	1647	1439 (next day)
178	Yinchuan — Beijing West Station	1413	1211 (next day)
43	Beijing West Station — Yinchuan — Lanzhou	0817	Yinchuan: 0511 (next day) Lanzhou: 1327 (next day)
44	Lanzhou — Yinchuan — Beijing West Station	1638	Yinchuan: 0035 (next day) Beijing: 2134 (next day)
585/588	Xi'an — Yinchuan	1620	0902 (next day)
586/587	Yinchuan — Xi'an	1517	0750 (next day)
396/397	Shanghai West Station — Yinchuan	2256	1239 (the 3rd day)
395/398	Yinchuan — Shanghai West Station	0811	2018 (next day)
774	Wuwei — Zhongwei — Yinchuan	2128	Zhongwei: 0329 (next day) Yinchuan: 0615 (next day)
773	Yinchuan — Zhongwei — Wuwei	2116	Zhongwei: 0004 (next day) Wuwei: 0652 (next day)

\* For reference only.





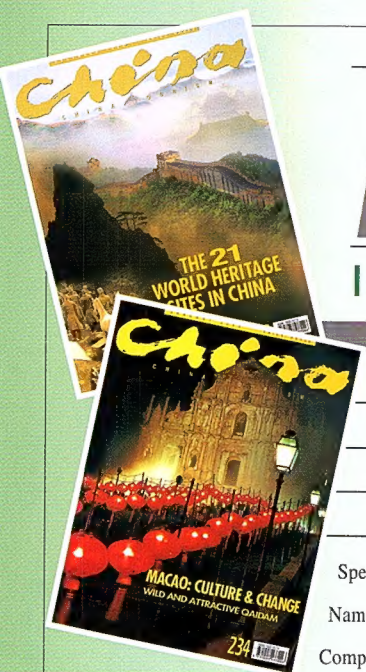
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